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of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Back to the Indian

AMERICAN writers usually belong to a minority party—especially the good American writers. From Cooper down through Emerson, Thoreau, Whittier, Mark Twain, Whitman, and Henry Adams, they have been violently critical of the way the country was going. Literary and commercial America in the nineteenth century are not one new world, but two.

Historians have been more complaisant. With the exception of Adams, the major figures have been content to extol like Bancroft, record like Roades, or verify facts like the current school of scientific investigators. Yet any observer who had watched discontent with American civilization spreading through the mid-Western novel, or the vivid rewriting of American social history in the poetry of Masters and Lindsay, might have guessed that a sporadic attack, such as the recent charge of thirty Americans upon their civilization, was only a beginning. We shall have histories and biographies in which the Revolution becomes a brawl, Andrew Jackson, a devil of anarchy, George Washington, an ignorant prig, and the United States is seen to have gone wrong at the beginning and never recovered.

Mr. D. H. Lawrence, some years ago, wrote an extremely suggestive book upon classic American literature which was an attack upon the suppression of instinct in America. According to him, the great Americans were all thwarted by their environment. Pioneer life and a new country bred in them a kind of old Indian devil which was constantly trying to get out, but failing to break through the crust of convention chiefly because there was a Puritan with a shotgun waiting at each crack. Mr. Lawrence is not an academic person, and American literature is still regarded as *infra dig.* by too American scholars, hence his book was not much read by students. If it was sometimes grotesquely wrong in its American estimates, its author was sometimes astonishingly and illuminatingly right.

From this book, Mr. William Carlos Williams, an American poet and modernist, who surveys his home from the perspective of Paris, seems to have drawn a sheaf of ideas for his "In the American Grain"* and added new ones of his own. His disjointed, jolting style comes, at a long remove, from Carlyle, but his point of view is strictly modern in its discontent. In a sweep of free fantasias, from Red Erik down to Poe, he delves toward the roots of American life, and illustrates his comments on American heroes by lengthy quotation from sources often too little known. And always the result is the same. The instinctive, full-blooded people, like Burr and Boone, who did what they wanted —especially with women—were never appreciated. It has been the crafty, prudent folk like Franklin, the cold-blooded conservatives like Hamilton, the godly New Englanders, who together have built a materialistic, hypocritical, puritanical America and got all the praise. The "swill-hole" of Paterson is a monument to Hamilton's foresightedness, aimless thrift and energy are Franklin's heritage. Prosperity and comfort have merely de-animated us. There was more virtue in the Indian than in the Puritan who slew him.

Mr. Williams is a poet and not a historian, and his book is a poet's protest not a historian's unbiased summary. It would be unfair to subject his brooding criticism to close scrutiny. He is another, if a less original, Rousseau, come to praise the unknown and the might-have-been. It is curious how primitive, instinctive man, with "the open, free assertion" of originality, keeps bobbing up to threaten stale civilizations. Rousseau made of him the most successful bogey that ever scared a world into revolution. But that he never existed, that the Indians, as Crèvecœur remarked, were only too little like him, did not lessen his influence. He helped to overturn the *ancien régime.*

We need not call Mr. Williams's book another "Nouvelle Héloïse," although it has striking passages as well as confused ones. His "De Soto" is very fine. But we would do well to regard the increasing number of books that deny all the values of what we supposed was our history, which attack the moral impulse as the curse of America, make the uncontrolled frontiersman our only hero, condemn New England intellectualism with every drawn breath, and assert that continence, efficiency, standardiza-

(*Continued on page* 430)

*In the American Grain. By William Carlos Williams. New York: A. & C. Boni. 1925. $3.00.

The First Christmas

BY NATHALIE SEDGWICK COLBY

PART of the teeming silence of the night
Mary great with Calvary waited, where
In the shed heavy with the thaw of air
Against the cows, she suffered when her right
Hour came; but soon forgot it holding tight
Her visible exaltation—more fair
Than any child had ever been, her care
The cradling compass of his pushing might.

More blest! Did she then see the hill of years
Beyond the blue sheathed bud of ecstacy?
Know that her rapture veiled its toll of tears
Wept for the flower hung upon the tree?
Hear herself crooning out to God-like ears
Remote from the deep thrust of vacancy?

This Week

"Andrew Bride of Paris." Reviewed by *William Rose Benet.*
"Broomsticks and Other Stories." Reviewed by *Amy Loveman.*
"The Private Life of Helen of Troy." Reviewed by *Lloyd Morris.*
"The Song of the Indian War." Reviewed by *Julius T. House.*
"Tiger Joy." Reviewed by *Hervey Allen.*
"The Tragedy of Waste." Reviewed by *W. E. Woodward.*
"Biology of the Population Problem." Reviewed by *E. M. East.*
The Bowling Green. By *Christopher Morley.*

Next Week, or Later

The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan. Reviewed by *William Allen White.*
"The Man Mencken." Reviewed by *Sidney Howard.*

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Fire Feathers

BY THOMAS BEER

WHEN he was sixteen years and two days old he wrote a note of thanks for a birthday gift and included in his remark: "Big storm yesterday and all the black waves had frills of torn white paper." Eleven years and some months later he wrote in the same tall, angular script: "One day, our despatch boat found the shores of Guantanamo Bay flowing past on either side. It was at nightfall and on the eastward point a small village was burning, and it happened that a fiery light was thrown upon some palm trees so that it made them into enormous crimson feathers. The water was the color of blue steel; the Cuban woods were sombre; high shivered the gory feathers. . . ." This second image is framed, delicately thrust forward in the long narrative paragraph. The fire feathers tremble high above cloudy woods and metallic water; but there is no insistence on the matter. He died in his twenty-ninth year without discovering that successful literature is mainly the conciliation of stupid people.

Mr. Wilson Follett has edited the remains of this talent, and Stephen Crane is now available to another generation which can make something or nothing of the business, as it pleases. Art is merely a form of fashion spread from certain points of innovation, and its history is constantly checked by the most commonplace of economic laws. Crane's emblem in his period is a necktie which he bought in Mexico City, an indigo whirl of silk shot through with stripes of red and green. This afflicting object was finally suppressed by Mr. Thomas Masson who implored Crane not to wear it any more at luncheons of the Lantern Club, and Mr. Masson is under no censure. As a necktie it lacks benevolence; as figured silk it is very beautiful even in its preserved decrepitude, but it had no excuse in 1896. It was a companion to: "The red sun was pasted in the sky like a wafer," the terminal sentence of Chapter 9 in "The Red Badge of Courage." You really couldn't do that in 1896, and as doing that was somehow natural to the fourteenth child of the Reverend Jonathan Townley Crane his case had a rough trial.

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In his foreword to "Maggie" William Dean Howells paused to toss a little bomb at "the many foolish people who cannot discriminate between the material and the treatment in art, and think that beauty is inseparable from daintiness and prettiness. . . ." The useless puff of white fire was a delayed retort, in spirit, to the legendary gentleman of Madrid who wanted to kill Francisco Goya y Lucientes for sketching an obese bawd when he had been graciously permitted to paint the Queen of Spain. This Goya slicked on canvas the best waistcoats of the court or the naked prettiness of some alcalde's mistress with all the cynical suavity of a Latin in debt, and then turned with loving ferocity to peasants and taverns, suspended exquisite nightmares in planes of black and white, and slung a wreath of harpies around the slimness of a dreaming girl. However, one should stick to the Queen of Spain. The nineteenth century amassed a critical vocabulary for those who didn't—"morbid," "pessimistic," "outré," with or without accent, "lurid," "sensational," and "depressing." In 1891 and 1892 the public butt of this vocabulary was a quiet little Englishman named Hardy, author of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and the private sufferer

*The works of Stephen Crane. Edited by Wilson Follett. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. 12 vols. $90.

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was Stephen Crane, author of the unpublished "Maggie." The massive, dissertive realism of the first English form was on trial along with realism by impression, and the emblematic Queen of Spain was the judge of the occasion. The voice of Théophile Gautier echoed over the dispute, hinting that correctness of line was virtue. . . .

Was Crane's line correct in "Maggie"? Amazingly so for a boy of twenty, and often perfect. He had already made two observations in æsthetics which are quite authentic and which have been repeated since by people who never heard of him. He told a friend at Syracuse, "One need respect nothing in art except one's own opinion of it," and he wrote in the spring of 1891: "I can not see why people hate 'ugliness' in art. Ugliness is just a matter of treatment. The scene of Hamlet and his mother and the death of old Polonius behind the curtain is ugly, if you heard it in a police court. Hamlet treats his mother like a drunken carter and his words when he has killed Polonius are disgusting. But who cares? You are hearing something fine in the theater and the fine quality of it gives you a kind of quick sympathy with Mr. Shakespeare . . . ." Underline the words "fine quality" and "quick sympathy with Mr. Shakespeare"—the sympathy with the artist, in short, behind his apparatus, the mood impossible to the Queen of Spain and the many foolish. So for the boy who lifted the warped, groping figure of Maggie's brother and had the supreme restraint which let the girl drift silently across the vision of indifferent men, indifferent windows to the brink of the East River, some of us, unimportantly, have a quick sympathy, and rather more so than for the mature Thomas Hardy who hammered in the fate of Tess with hard strokes of advertisement. . . .

She went into the blackness of the final block. The shutters of tall buildings were closed like grim lips. The structures seemed to have eyes that looked over them, beyond them at other things. Afar off the lights of the avenues glittered as if from an impossible distance. Street car bells jingled with a sound of merriment. At the feet of the tall buildings appeared the deathly black hue of the river. Some hidden factory sent up a yellow glare that lit for a moment the waters oilily lapping against timbers. The varied sounds of life made joyous by distance and seeming unapproachableness, came faintly and died away to a silence.

Why add that the Immortals had finished their sport with Maggie Johnson? And yet it was for not saying so in loud, determined tones that Crane's contemporaries failed of recognizing in him a deliberate intelligence. Moreover he should have written "died away to silence" if he wanted to be friendly to the current theory of prose. Yet, even in this awkward little novel, he set out a visible line.

The case of Crane's prose is simply the case for a modern prose which happened to be written from 1890 to 1899, and selection is the only applicable test. Let us see:

The fire crackled musically. From it swelled light smoke. Overhead the foliage moved softly. The leaves, with their faces turned toward the blaze, were colored, shifting hues of silver, often edged with red. . . . In the foreground four solemn men in dress suits are walking along the sidewalk with a stretcher on which lies a drunken woman in a white evening dress. Her hand which dangles over the side, sparkles cold with jewels. . . . And all through the room could be seen the tawny hues of naked flesh, limbs thrust into the darkness, projecting beyond the cots; upreared knees, arms hanging long and thin over the cot edges. . . . Bud sat on the edge of the cot and stretched out his arms and yawned. From all around through a smell of sweat and sour breath and wet clothes came snores, the sound of men strirring in their sleep, creaking of bedsprings. . . . In the absence of a discouraged sun the shorn trees were sweating coldly on the hillside. . . . High in the sky soared an unassuming moon, faintly silver. . . . Kelcy began to stare at the wallpaper. The pattern was clusters of brown roses. He felt them, like hideous crabs crawling upon his brain. . . . A rim of the young moon cleft the pale waste of skyline, the rim of a silver hoop embedded in gray sand. . . . On the green Sound, stagnant in the heat, one small sail crawled slowly toward the fresher sea. . . . There was a vista of sand and sky and sea that drew to a mystic point far away in the northward. In the mighty angle a girl in a red dress was crawling slowly like some kind of spider on the fabric of nature. . . . Old wall whre sudden lizards flashed. . . . A stream where fish were swiftly bright. . . .

I doubt that Crane's prose can be immediately disentangled from that of James Joyce, Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, and Thomas Boyd save by people of expert memory. He could not always reduce his idiom to the smoothness of the best modern practitioners, and there are throwbacks to the leisurely styles of Howells and Hamlin Garland, the writing of the '80s at its best. But in "War Memories," the last rally of his astonishing talent, there are ten passages of amazing dextrousness in sheer narrative and his insolent use of repeated words to maintain an impression came to perfection. For instance:

I gave five dollars for the Bos'n—small, black, spry imp of Jamaican sin. When I first saw him he was the property of a fireman on the Criton. The fireman had found him—a little wharf rat—in Port Antonio. It was not the purchase of a slave; it was that the fireman believed that he had spent about five dollars on a lot of comic supplies for the Bos'n, including a little suit of sailor clothes. The Bos'n was an adroit and fantastic black gamin. His eyes were like white lights, and his teeth were a row of little piano keys; otherwise he was black. . . . . .

The very rapid union of anecdote and description is one of Crane's persistent qualities. Landor, and Arnold, and perhaps Mrs. Wharton would question "on a lot of" and the very moderns would write "his eyes were white lights" but the effect is certainly never tedious.

He was seldom a tedious writer, even in "The Third Violet," where the compression is so exacting that the pretty girls and young artists of the little fable fairly sink back into the paper and the story becomes a skeleton in horrid need of rags. The compliment paid him by Frank Norris: "He knows when to shut up," is handsomely accurate. But Crane's deficiency, as a writer for general use, is simply that he didn't realize the value of stuff and nonsense. The legitimate pathos of "Maggie" and "George's Mother" lies in the understatement, as the figures of the cancerous little actress and the obsessed Bud Korpenning rise today through the rich confusion of "Manhattan Transfer" to claim the recognition of their impure, simple woe. Maggie is a stupid child; Mrs. Kelcy is what Howells called her, "a poor, inadequate woman of a commonplace religiosity"; George Kelcy is a dolt. The tramps of "An Experiment in Misery" and the huddled breadline of "The Men in the Storm" are beings dulled by their misfortune. His intense restraint served Crane badly in these sketches of the misfit and deject. His contemporaries, if you please, were snivelling on paper over Pierre Loti's "Matelot" when Crane cut under all that perfumed funereal matter and merely stated the case, and left it. His "distinguished incapacity" for the maudlin, then, was a deficiency in the early '90s. The success of "The Red Badge of Courage" gave him his hearing with the public and established him as an influential writer, but the rest of his story is simply that of a comedy in misunderstanding. His enemy was the tragic idea—*l'idea tragica*, true daughter of the tuberose and the obituary editorial, sister of the Queen of Spain. He had, in fact, reduced tragedy to its modern residue in 1893.

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Mr. Wilson Follett's edition of the work shows a noble restraint in the face of Crane's experimental punctuation and battered infinitives. Nothing much has been omitted, and nothing of any value. The newspaper sketches in which first appeared "a human bit of wreckage," "the popular mind," and a "shadowy ideal of conduct" had no other interest than those transmutable and endeared phrases. The real deficiencies are patent enough; he was not a novelist in the convenient sense; his best verses are graceful epigrams in rhythm, with occasional felicities of phrase; he could not boil a pot easily and he sometimes compressed good things into nakedness. What then remains of the talent? . . . . A landscape, wonderfully rendered in a series of illusions, flakes of color, and odd similes, and in this landscape the animal called man moves without the slightest importance, supplying himself with that quality as best he can, between his misfortunes, for this human body, "the citadel of wisdom, virtue, power," is nothing but X in a problem of irregular mathematics infected by unknown quantities. This is a children's playground set around with trees lacquered by sunlight, singing flowers, roofed in soft enamel. But Mike the driver has jumped off his loaded truck on the hillside above the happy infants to help an old lady shake a dog from her skirts and the truck is rolling down to smash through the fence into the playground, to veer off and ruin the first Methodist Church of Whilomville, to stop lazily and back away just as nine small girls faint in a starched bouquet on the pretty green of the grass. Mike the driver will inevitably go to jail or lose his job for his carelessness. The "blunder of virtue" has loosed something atrocious. Crane's ironies belong in the old definition of the word: mystification, studies in the senselessness of things. He proposed problems in the irregular mathematics of human conduct, and his X, the human animal, has no rights, no escape, and, finally, no reward if he shows himself courageous under the calamity. The waves will break his back as he gets one foot on solid shore; the town of Whilomville will insult him and neglect his wife's tea-table; his mistress will amiably hand herself over to the most profitable suitor when he has blinked at the machete falling on his head. The animal called man, in short, is still the animal called man and never flattered by the psychological reporter at his elbow.

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The breach between Crane and the critical writers of his time widened, book by book, and that fissure is adequately displayed in reviews of "The Monster." Only Harry Thurston Peck seemed to see that the point of this story was not the simple production of horror, but the effect of the maimed negro on the public mind of Whilomville. "This parable," said the jaunty professor, "is Mr. Crane's Æschylean method of telling us how silly we are." But the book was a failure with the general public and with most of the critics. Being dead Crane had a momentary triumph in 1901. The reviewers discovered in "War Memories" a remarkable description of the taking of San Juan hill. There is no such description, but there is, instead, a fascinating arrangement in narrative by which the poet leads his lambs to the brink of the battle, points their gaze to the tiny patch of blue uniforms on the harsh green of the hillside, makes Captain Arthur Lee, the British *attaché*, break into protests against this waste of life, and lets the roused imagination do the rest. So Crane vanished, imagist, realist, impressionist, and symbolist—and four or five years after his disappearance, bits of his prose, plots of his tales began to crawl into sight again in the work of literary debutants. The editor of *Munsey's* in 1905 wrote to one beginner that he would not accept Crane's "Twelve O'Clock" in a secondary form. "But," says the unconscious thief, ...

I had utterly forgotten the original story. It has sunk in, and it came out again, as far as I was concerned, as a wholly original idea of my own, and I was very much pleased with it! I think you will find that the shortness of Crane's effects caused a lot of us to forget him while we mechanically remembered his plots—if you call his effects plots. Literary people are human, and being human they are impressed by fuss and bulk. Crane's work had no bulk. It was trained down to the last ounce. Who would ever think of stealing "Tono Bungay?" You must spend three hours at the very least reading such a story. Ten minutes will do for "The Five White Mice" and fifteen for "The Blue Hotel." His work was slight, as Van Wyck Brooks says somewhere, and that slightness ruined any hope that he may have had of becoming a "great" author. He simply wasn't thick enough.

Primarily a recorder of mental states and attitudes, he discussed these things in a rapid, telegraphic tick-ing of words. "The Red Badge of Courage" will probably remain his most admired affair, as the enormous effort of its production forced him into a certain elaboration of the theme. He himself thought that "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" was his best tale. Let us see. . . . The marshal of Yellow Sky, embarrassed in a new black suit, is bringing home his quite ordinary bride from San Antonio in the harassing glories of a shiny Pullman car. The marshal worries because the boys of Yellow Sky don't know that he has gone to San Antonio to be married. Meanwhile in the little town the redoubtable Scratchy Wilson has got drunk and is on the loose, shooting at things. The inhabitants simply bar their doors and crawl under tables in the saloons. None will go out to battle. Wilson meets the marshal and his bride as they round a corner, sneaking guiltily to the marshal's house. The melodrama piles itself in a direct confrontation. Wilson is the loaded truck at the fence of the playground. The stolid marshal stands with his hands thrown up and declares himself unarmed. Unarmed? Yes, he has been getting married in San Antonio and has no gun on him. Married? . . . The drunkard's mind staggers under the entry of this unknown quantity. He has been so created that his maroon sweatshop shirt and childish boots have already made him a little funny. The melodrama topples and vanishes. The truck slides away from the fence. Oh, all right! He sheathes his revolver and lurches off, his boots making holes in the sand of the street. Crane is done with the business. All the ordinary values of

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his situation have been thrown away, [illegible] and the woman remain merely plain people. [illegible] is a body containing a quart or so of rye [illegible] supporting two revolvers. There is no [illegible] there is no hero. Anything may happen [illegible] Sky, but what does happen seems unavoidable [illegible] ---and inevitably perplexing, as humanity [illegible] us.

Behind these characters, so simply [illegible] appears a chorus of idlers, frumps in [illegible] drunken stevedores, and virtuous women [illegible] the function of the Greek chorus by [illegible] processes. They do not explain the will of the immortals; they explain nothing. They talk, chattering with the broken violence of Americans and saying something apposite only by hazard. They talk, and daze one by the perfection of their inconsequence. Henry James and Rudyard Kipling were using sensitized ladies, subalterns in the club, and writers to point up their pictures by a verbal commentary from the background. Crane used his chorus on its own merits, to display the meaninglessness of human criticism, and when he was told that his people said nothing, he drawled, "What do people usually say?" And behind the characters and the chorus appears the scene itself, so swiftly suggested, so charmingly left to speak its own part without prompting. The purple sage flows right and left of the train; the waves heave the open boat in a long, even roll and the meditative gulls sit on the tumult pensively. The signals of a warship are jewelled brooches in the tropic night. The exploding acids that wash off a man's face are elves of delicate color. The sun is glued to the sky and the unassuming moon watches us timidly as we stroll in the music of the band beside the sea's unknown emotions. So what does it matter that your own kindness will bring you into scorn and loss, or that your breath in the darkness will annoy men into wishing that the Spanish bullet had pierced your heart instead of your lungs? An eventual, dry tenderness envelops your calamities; you are no more than the light upon the leaves, a thing of transient beauty when the red fire showed you swaying above the immortal bonfire, but you are no less than the light or the piling beryl of the sea or the shark's wake circling the desperate boat or the hue of burning oil. This is no great consolation for a broken neck or a bruised self respect, but it is something. Such beauty as you had has been wrung out of you on paper, and if it isn't the pink ribbons and best frock so admired by partisans of the Queen of Spain, it is still something that has endured for a while, and longevity is no worse a test in art than another.

One Young Critic Abroad

ANDREW BRIDE OF PARIS. By Henry Sydnor Harrison. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1925. $2.

Reviewed by William Rose Benét

MR. HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON is always a graceful writer. In his story of Andrew Bride he traces the course of an American interpreter of European culture who went to Paris to write a book, "Notes for an American Æsthetic," because his own country's preoccupation with commerce and sodden indifference to art and beauty gave him a big, swift pain. Andrew Bride's story is obviously one founded on the stories of certain young American *littérateurs* of recent years. They were to find the only true inspiration abroad.

Mr. Harrison, of course, makes his hero perfectly charming. Mr. Harrison always makes his heroes perfectly charming. Well, why not? Why shouldn't he? His hero falls in love with a perfectly charming girl who eventually brings him back to America. Mr. Harrison has treated his theme with light comedy, though with amused sympathy.

A young radical would quarrel violently with Mr. Harrison's view of Andrew Bride. He would declare that Mr. Harrison had softened harsh outlines and indulged in sentiment at the expense of the crusading spirit. Well, Mr. Harrison has. He has not written a novel of flaming revolt. He has not taken his theme with intense seriousness. He has played variations upon it on the piccolo. He has created one scene of high comedy in which Mr. Bride is involved in lamentable publicity and a glorious dilemma. Somebody very like Mr. H. L. Mencken is also involved, and the laugh is on Bride; [illegible] that Mr. Bride's charming girl is won for [illegible] very incident.

[illegible] charming girl, young and serious. Andrew [illegible] is young and serious. Mr. Harrison sympathizes with their seriousness and is charmed by their [illegible]. He regards them as a genial uncle might regard them. He is not writing propaganda. He does not patronize them. On page 130 he turns upon the reader and remarks:

> You have possibly pictured the day when a "strange" nostalgia is suddenly to overwhelm him (Andrew Bride), when his heart leaps at the sight of a faded flag, tears start at the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and he returns, chastened, to his native strand—and to "a typical American girl," so you of course would figure it—to consort admiringly thenceforward with responsible business men, who really make a country great, and cite America at banquets as the finest of God's many countries.
>
> Alas, that truth must be stranger than fiction! Nothing of this sort happened or could conceivably happen.

Mr. Harrison's *dénouement* is subtler, more hilarious, and truer to human nature. Mr. Bride does not change his spots. He remains a consistent leopard of letters. He simply has fallen head over heels in love, and gets the girl. And that might happen to anyone, without loss of principle. Of course, she brings him home.

Mr. Harrison has a sense of humor, and, as we began by saying, he is always a graceful writer. His narrative possesses urbane charm. It is a slight but entertaining romance.

Caricature of Byron, by Max Beerbolm, from "The Pilgrim of Eternity," by John Drinkwater (Doran).

Woven of Magic

BROOMSTICKS AND OTHER TALES. By Walter de la Mare. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. $3.50 net.

Reviewed by Amy Loveman

MR. DE LA MARE'S art is sheer necromancy. He sets a spell upon his reader, the more perhaps if that reader is of mature mind than if he is the youthful person for whom his tales are intended. Indeed the delicate artistry of his performance is too rare and subtle a thing to be fully appreciated except by those who know how infinitely difficult is the blending of whimsy with ingenuity, of simplicity with poetry, that lends to his stories their lovely quality. A fantastic imagination that is only fantastic in that it plays with old material in unexpected fashion and not in that it adds anything of the grotesque to it, an exquisite use of words that convey the color, and texture, and sound of the object described and carry a connotation that evokes the subject in all the richness of fancy as well as of actuality, a tenderness of feeling that is never sweet but that can sweeten and make plausible for the child as well as for the adult even so grim a fact as death, these are traits that place Mr. de la Mare's tales among the classics. We have read no more charming story than "Jemima" in many a long day, or more amusing of its kind than "Broomsticks," or more gracefully philosophic than "Alice's Godmother," which in half intangible fashion suggests Hawthorne in its turn of thought and method. But the essence of Walter de la Mare can no more be distilled than his fancy can be prisoned. To be known he must be read, and once read he will be sought again and again. Here is a book to have and hold.

Gay Irony

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HELEN OF TROY. By John Erskine. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1925. $2.50.

Reviewed by Lloyd Morris

MR. ERSKINE'S book is an exceptionally amusing affair. It is gay, sophisticated, and a trifle malicious. Its wisdom is civilized, urbane, and provocative. It will disconcert the Puritans but delight the intelligent. For the pleasure evoked by "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" is strictly intellectual, and springs from the free play of intelligence upon experience. This indicates that the book is outside the main tradition of the English novel which, having borrowed from poetry the function of communicating emotion, has seldom been concerned with ideas. Mr. Erskine's book stems from the French tradition, which admits, as appropriate to the novel, a substance of ideas. The Anglo-Saxon mind has conceded the respectability of ideas only infrequently. It has usually regarded them as being, like sin, natural but dangerous; it has avoided them whenever possible; it has contemplated them with solemnity but without delight. Those English writers who have dealt gaily with ideas have usually earned the reputation of being indecent, as did the Restoration dramatists. The Gallic mind has never learned to regard thought as an impurity. To the Gallic mind intelligence has never seemed an obstacle to sanctity, but a function to be enjoyed.

In his attitude toward ideas and in his use of them, Mr. Erskine is more French than English; his book is enriched by our memories of Montaigne and Voltaire, by our contact with Anatole France. "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" is undeniably contemporary, but essentially Greek. Mr. Erskine has not written a pseudo-historical novel. He has taken, as the framework of his novel, the legend of Helen's return to Sparta after the Trojan defeat. And he has employed that legend as the vehicle for a skeptical examination of certain permanent attitudes of human nature toward certain of its permanent experiences and problems. His book is composed, not as narrative, but as dialogue; the structure is dialectical rather than dramatic. The legend, serving as plot, serves chiefly to involve the characters in a series of situations which successively raise problems of conduct that engender conflicts of attitude. Remembering Plato, Mr. Erskine has not dissociated philosophy from art; the end of his dialogue is ideas, but its medium is character. Helen and Menelaos, Hermione and Orestes, Eteoneus and the others emerge clearly and vitally as individuals. Their characters are expressed in their opinions; they are as convincingly real as the celebrants of love in the Symposium or the polite disputants of Castiglione's "Il Cortegiano." Because they are profoundly eternal, they seem specifically contemporary.

The peculiarly delectable qualities of this book are wit, irony, satire. The surface of the dialogue is highly polished, for all its deceptive colloquialism, and its effect is an unflagging scintillation. Mr. Erskine's Helen, whose intelligence equals her beauty, will no doubt bewilder readers habitually disposed to regard life as a moral probation rather than an opportunity for experience. Such readers may take comfort in the bewilderment of Menelaos, who is a liberal, and the suspicion of Hermione and Orestes, who are respectable Puritans. With admirable irony, Mr. Erskine suggests that Helen's conduct is justly appreciated only by Eteoneus, who is a strictly honest conservative, and being honest, is not quite respectable.

It is, however, the gaiety of Mr. Erskine's book that one acknowledges with delight. For he has given us a book that is invariably entertaining. It offers the reader a mood of civilized irony in which experience is contemplated without illusion but lived with love. It substitutes intellectual serenity for moral agitation, and it assumes, in the reader, a capacity for the sophisticated enjoyment of an eternal spectacle.

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The Epic West

THE SONG OF THE INDIAN WARS. By JOHN G. NEIHARDT. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1925. $2.25.

Reviewed by JULIUS T. HOUSE
New River State College, W. Va.

SIX years after the publication of "The Song of Three Friends" and nine years from the appearance of "The Song of Hugh Glass," John Neihardt now gives to the reading public the third piece of his epic cycle of the West, "The Song of the Indian Wars."

In this poem the most skeptical student of poetry will surely be compelled to ask most seriously whether the American epic has not indeed been written. "The Song of the Indian Wars" is truly epic in its material, being the tale of the last fight between two races for possession of the bison pastures of the West. It opens with the invasion of the trans-Missouri region just after the Civil War and closes with the collapse of Indian resistance at the death of Crazy Horse, the greatest of the Sioux chiefs, at Fort Robinson in 1887. Thus we have the essence of epic poetry, heroic struggle and overwhelming disaster.

With swift, sure strokes Neihardt begins his story and at once the prairies become the scene of a tremendous drama. The long reaches of the Missouri, with all its tributary streams, are touched with magic. The muddy water, unsightly sandbars, and stunted cottonwoods of the Kaw, the Solomon, the Big Horn, the Yellowstone, the Powder, shine with a "wakeful glory". The vast reaches of the plains, the loneliness, and terror of the desert hold a spirit of beauty.

Not only does the poem reveal the Indian modes of life, but we see the Indian Chiefs, for the first time in literature, what they were in fact, individuals, each with a temperament and philosophy of his own; Red Cloud, the natural rebel; Spotted Tail, disillusioned Apostle of Peace; Sitting Bull, arch-demigogue, half hero and half mountebank; Crazy Horse, mystic and seer. It is a unique achievement, that of making historical characters of an alien race genuine persons in a great poem, and the authenticity of this work strengthens the grip of the poem on the reader.

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It is a safe venture that the religious spirit of primitive man has never been shown with more truth or more perfect art than in the "Sun Dance" in the Village of Crazy Horse shortly before the Sioux met and wiped out Custer and his band on the Little Horn. Essentially it might have been written of any primitive people.

The poet also knows and is fair to the whites. The dashing courage of Fetterman, riding to his death on Peno Hill after he had boasted that, with eighty men, he could ride through the whole Sioux nation is told in lines that thrill; the dogged endurance of Forsythe and his band on Beecher's Island, the long retreat of Crook through mud and muck with men and horses falling from exhaustion are in our literature to remain. About Custer, in particular, Neihardt weaves the mood of glory and of doom. The gleaming chariots and spears of Greeks and Trojans around the walls of Troy are not more colorful than "Long Hair" and his famous troop as they march out from Fort Lincoln, nor did Homer ever better give the sense of fate that moves in all epics.

The hero of the tale is Crazy Horse, who, a youth of twenty, rose in eleven years to be the supreme leader of the Sioux and at thirty-one was killed at Fort Robinson. It is the inner nature of tragedy that the hero heads a defeated people and himself perishes. Hector is the real, though not the nominal hero, of the Iliad. His death is at the hand of fate and typifies the glory and the transiency of Troy and of all things human. So Crazy Horse and the Indian civilization. Crazy Horse is the finest man of all the leaders on either side. He never fought off his own ground, land granted by treaty. He merely resisted invasion. He was the refuge of his people, a mystic and a seer, and Homer wrote no better burial lines over Hector than Neihardt over this Indian hero:

> Who knows the crumbling summit where he lies
> Alone among the badlands? Kiotes prowl
> About it and the voices of the owl
> Assume the day-long sorrow of the crows
> These many glasses and these many snows.

With all that may be said for the perfection of other phases of the poem the reviewer feels that the supreme achievement lies in its unity—the mood of the whole. To secure this result was a difficult task, for the material is not an easily connected series of incidents. The mood of doom comes, not because a hero falls, not even because a great civilization passes away forever, but because of the feeling of inevitable change in all things human that is induced in the reader. The completed work reminds one of a noble piece of architecture, like the new state capitol of the poet's own state as conceived by Goodhue and now being built into marble. Stern, chaste, far-gazing, with no ornamentation, every line of the poem, as every line of the building, is part of a great whole, and it is the whole alone that is significant, the mood of things greatly conceived and greatly wrought.

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Is it significant that Homer wrote in a disillusioned time some five hundred years after the event? Is there that in human nature that must find a glory in life, even if it be necessary to look backward for a golden age, when the present has become prose? Is it perhaps significant that the Neihardt epic stories of the earlier freedom of the West are being eagerly studied in the schools of America, that "The Song of Three Friends" and the "Song of Hugh Glass" are the first poems by one author, published entire and alone with notes and maps, since the days of the Old New England school of poetry?

Possibly the hour of obsession with material prosperity and "keeping the gas tank full" is about to pass away, and our society swing back to the old heroic virtues! Possibly, in this day of great hurry, it may give some relief to peruse the perfect lines that have resulted from four and one-half years of labor on a single volume.

Arresting Poetry

TIGER JOY. By STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1925. $1.75.

Reviewed by HERVEY ALLEN
Author of "Earth Moods"

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT has chosen the title for his new book from Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound."

> Oh gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
> The caverns of my pride's deep universe
> Charming the tiger, joy. . . . .

The "moonlight" running through these poems seems to be a combination of retrospective yearning for the romantic in the past, and a passionate but finely restrained sorrow for the passing of youth. The blending of these two themes has supplied the leaven of maturity to the poet's youthful exuberance, with the result that "Tiger Joy," Mr. Benét's sixth book, occupies a place on the shelf reserved for poetry with considerable grace and vigor.

Out of the thirty-nine offerings in this green and gold speckled volume of one hundred and nineteen pages, two poems stand up waist-high above the not inconsequential level of the others. These are "The Hemp," a narrative poem in three movements, and "The Golden Corpse," a sequence of eight powerful and purposeful Shakespearean sonnets.

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In "The Hemp" Mr. Benét abandons the little lyre of this generation to seize a man's-sized harp and tell us an "old Virginia" legend of one Captain Hawk, a pirate who manages to be bad instead of naughty and rapes a young lady with a cold-hearted gusto which convinces us that the Captain is not a marionette in a costume rented by the poet for the episode. The father of the unfortunate maiden objects in an early Eighteenth Century manner by seeking out the said Captain Hawk on the high seas and hanging him amidst general applause in a stout hemp noose, the planting, growing, and raising of which provides a nice unity to the architectual scheme of this ballad that makes it come off unusually successfully. Stephen Benét is one of the few American poets who can make a narrative poem from end to end without employing occasional passages of mere verse; his epithets and proper names are often peculiarly fortunate.

In the swiftly fleeting cataract of modern sonnets, so popular with space-niggardly editors, Stephen Benét's biographical sequence in "The Golden Corpse" deserves the fixed attention of the spectator on the banks of the poetical whirlpool rapids. The phrasing of these eight sonnets is in the grand tradition, the implication of background is unavoidable, and the twin themes of human mutability and brave sorrow for the passing of youth are handled with a significance that convinces us the poet is speaking out of a maturity of thought and emotion that augurs well for his future if he cares again to draw upon this rich vein. If Stephen Benét can sometime give us a whole book cast in the mold from which the "Golden Corpse" comes forth to walk and to haunt us, there will be more than a few applauding guests at his ghost party.

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The rest of the poems, which space here condemns to a too brief mention, are more often whimsically striking than memorable. To this statement several surprisingly succinct epitaphs compact with human tragedy are a notable exception. All the sophistication of technique and a modern philosophy does not save one from feeling in "King David," however, that the attempt to view the heroes and gods of another age through a modern glass, and then laugh, is an unwarranted assumption of the superiority of the present perspective. The telescope of a great renaissance sculptor has settled the fact that David's nakedness was sublime, while Mr. Benét's opera glass asks us to believe that it was ridiculous. Distant Biblical characters can be clearly discerned only through the largest lenses, the grinding of these requires great art and a vast patience. Perhaps somewhat the same restriction applies to the somewhat too nervously and consciously vigorous, nature loving frontiersman which "William Sycamore" presents. In cold honesty that gentleman becomes a somewhat lay figure dressed in a coonskin cap while he sniffs at bayberry candles. On the other hand Mr. Benét gets the magic elbow grease and resin of the genuine mountain fiddler into the "Mountain Whippoorwill' so that we have to shuffle our feet as we read his tune. Nor does the poem have to be "chanted" by its author before we get the lilt. The rhythm is really there, in the print, as it should be.

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One of the chief virtues of "Tiger Joy" is the pleasing and really pathetic naiveté of such poems as "Legend." Just how the author manages to remain genuine with an affected childishness, we do not know, but he does, and "Rosemary's Muff" and "St. Paul" and the winter sparrows all are made at home in a little protestant-Roman-Catholic-mediæval-modern poem that rings a nice tinkly Christmas bell and makes us feel sorry for two little orphans in the snow for whom a happy ending is provided that is a real miracle with miraculous cookies and a muff.

It would be decidedly wrong, however, to give the impression that Mr. Benét's poems in this book are "pretty" or "slight." The volume presents a wide range of emotion, yet its predominant impression is that behind these pages is a young middle-aged man who can speak profoundly when he desires, but who avoids being solemn by now and then whistling a silvery and arresting tune. The combination is intriguing to say the least.

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of LITERATURE

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AMY LOVEMAN ..... *Associate Editor*
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY ..... *Contributing Editor*

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Tragedy of Waste

THE TRAGEDY OF WASTE. By Stuart Chase. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1925. $2.50.

Reviewed by W. E. Woodward
Author of "Bunk" and "Bread and Circuses."

ONE of the most striking aspects of our national life may be observed in the curious mass of contradictions that go to make up the American soul. We are bitter cynics and glowing idealists—both at the same time. We laugh at our own convictions, but nevertheless we are ready to fight for them.

To the ends of the earth runs our fame for business efficiency, but when we look closer, we see a glaring inefficiency towering over our little penny-saving short-cuts to mechanical perfection. We are certainly a democratic people; there is no doubt of that, but in many ways we are as caste-bound as Spain. We are the great get-together nation; we are entirely convinced of the intrinsic harmony of things, and are sure that every human controversy can be settled splendidly when man meets man in conference. Notwithstanding this, our labor disputes are the wonder of the world, and we waste more time in strikes than the whole of Europe. We have dedicated our energies to the whole-hearted production of material wealth, and at the same time we dissipate our resources hand over fist.

These inconsistencies are—perhaps—the symptoms of racial youth. The American nation is still in the making. We are yet in the wild-oats period of life; we have not yet become adjusted to the harsh facts of existence.

But we are going to run up against some rather sharp facts pretty soon, as Mr. Stuart Chase points out with convincing precision in "The Tragedy of Waste."

I am so impressed with Mr. Chase's book that I have read it three times. It is luminous and interesting, as well as important. I say this at the beginning, as the book deals with an economic question, and most people would rather go through a long spell of sickness than read an economic work of any kind.

Do you know that the supply of petroleum still underground in the United States will not last more than twenty years? God has been very kind to us in this matter; he has given us more petroleum than any other nation on earth, but our inefficient methods of drilling for oil and our total lack of government supervision, have already resulted in a waste of three-fourths of the total supply. Do you know that the end of American coal is in sight? Nevertheless, it still could be made to last for centuries by better methods of mining combined with more efficient ways of consumption. Perhaps you wonder why the farmer is always complaining. Mr. Chase shows that out of every dollar we pay for farm products the farmer gets only thirty-three cents. The big slice of the dollar goes to a long muddled string of middlemen, or is eaten up by extravagant and clumsy methods of distribution.

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Mr. Chase points out that the main cause of our stupendous waste of essential commodities and man-power is a natural result of the anarchy of commerce and industry. Industrialism is continually running in head-on opposition to the needs of society, for it has no guiding principle except to make a profit. This results in a conception of the world as an arena for the conquest of cash prizes. The idea of Service as a factor in business is a myth. Even the spokesmen of business admit it, cynically but candidly. Herbert N. Casson, who is a worshiper of business success and is qualified to speak on the subject, says: "The essence of business success is not to make good goods. It is not to have a host of employees. It is to have something left. The biggest word in the language of business is not gross, but net."

But, after all, what difference does it make whether the Service ideal is a fiction or a fact, if the prevailing industrialism produces commodities more efficiently and at a lower cost than could be done by any other system? Mr. Chase proves that it doesn't. He shows that it is no longer necessary to theorize about the matter, as we have already tried the experiment of carrying on the business of industrial production as a social function. When this country entered the World War the supervision of the industries of the nation was turned over to a Board of War Industries, as everyone remembers. The duty of the War Industries Board was to direct the entire production of the American people, to eliminate waste, to prevent unnecessary competition, to stop the manufacture of harmful and useless products, to cause the commodities of the country to move from producer to consumer by the most direct and simple routes.

This Board had to be quickly organized and was never in complete operation, yet it functioned so well that the production of necessary commodities had increased twenty-four percent in 1918 as compared with 1913, although in the year 1918 approximately ten million American workers were employed in some way or other in connection with the war—either as soldiers or as non-combatants who were engaged in supplying the needs of soldiers. Analyze this simple fact. It leads to the obvious conclusion that in time of peace we are habitually wasting the labor of about ten million people.

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Mr. Chase points out that although there are scores of automobile tire manufacturers in the United States there is one single plant in Ohio which is so large and well-equipped that it could alone supply all the tires used in this country. There's nothing exceptional in this condition of affairs. The tire industry is not the only field of industrial effort which has too much machinery. The steel industry is 70 percent over-equipped. The country is tremendously oversupplied with plants of all sorts. This results in drastic competition, which does not reduce prices but increases them, for the reason that every competing concern is obliged to fight for its life; which means that it must make large outlays in advertising, in salesmen, in salesrooms, in expensive methods of reaching the consumer.

The total outlay for advertising of all kinds in the United States is about one and a quarter billion of dollars a year. Mr. Chase with his passion for figuring money in terms of man-power shows that, at an average annual wage of $2000, this advertising expenditure keeps approximately six hundred thousand people employed in some manner in the production of advertising and its accessories. He does not conclude, however, that all advertising is wasteful. He thinks that possibly ten percent may be informative, and therefore desirable in a social sense.

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I wonder what the Average Business Man who spends a part of every day in talking about American efficiency would think of some of Mr. Chase's facts. For instance, he tells of the travels of a car of linseed which was routed from Undercliff to Bayonne, N. J., a distance of thirteen miles. The railroad, to keep all its revenue in its own hands, sent the car to Bayonne by a roundabout route of one hundred and seventy-nine miles. And there is the case of the Sugar Equalization Board, which took charge of the nation's sugar at the beginning of the war and held the price steadily at eight cents. As soon as the war was over and the sugar industry came again under private control the price of sugar went to twenty-four cents. Here's another. "One printer bought a trading stamp machine for seventeen thousand dollars," says Mr. Chase, "and then lost the job. This trading stamp contract has since gone to three different printers, and each in turn has bought a special machine for the work—four seventeen thousand dollar machines, where one would suffice." Consider shoes. They are a necessity; everybody wears them. There is no sensible reason why the public should have to pay for advertising, and high-power salesmen, and the rent of expensive stores in order to procure such necessary commodities. In addition to the waste in competition in the shoe industry, Mr. Chase shows that the changes in fashions—the multiplicity in styles—entails a large increase in the cost of manufacture. In 1920 the Regal Shoe Company, he says, produced no less than twenty-five hundred different styles of shoes. Most of these styles were the bright ideas of salesmen who found that they could get orders by offering special features. The average price of $10.46 a pair. In 1923 the company cut its styles to one hundred, and the price to the public was reduced to an average of $6.60 a pair.

You will like Mr. Chase's graceful and compact style, his clarity, and the ease with which he wields a large number of prickly and angular facts. Statistics never become heavy in his hands. "The Tragedy of Waste" is, in my opinion, one of the most important books that has appeared in America in this generation. Congress should pass a law compelling every American citizen to read Mr. Chase's book at least once.

Studies on Population

THE BIOLOGY OF THE POPULATION PROBLEM. By Raymond Pearl. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925.

Reviewed by E. M. East
Harvard University.

THE distinguished director of the Institute of Biological Research in the Johns Hopkins University is an irrepressible patron of the ink trust, probably the greatest living customer whose place of business is a musty hall of science. It has been said that he once counted the words, or perhaps only the pages, in a complete set of Voltaire in order to find out the minimum of labor he should set for himself. Voltaire lived to be eighty-five and set a terrific pace; but Pearl, still on the cheerful side of fifty, is making it a race. He is a prodigious worker, having to his credit hundreds of papers touching nearly every phase of experimental biology. And the extraordinary thing is that his contributions never fail to contribute. He always has something to say, something interesting, something stimulating.

The present volume, a series of studies on population increase, is no exception. It is not a volume for people with microscopic minds or people with lazy minds; but those who have the urge to know something of what Huxley said was the greatest of human problems, the colonial development of their species, will find plenty of food for reflection.

Dr. Pearl became interested in the enigmas connected with the increase of *Homo sapiens* during the period that he was Chief of the Statistical Division of the United States Food Administration. His work there gave him an insight into the parts known and the parts unknown. The unknown intrigued him as it does every scientist. It stimulated his mental apparatus as strongly as a dose of *Strychnos nux-vomica* would have stimulated his circulatory system. He wanted to fill in the holes in this particular universe immediately. Now after five years of patient work we have a series of completed experiments which leave the subject much less like *fromage gruyère* than it was in 1920.

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Dr. Pearl's first attack was directed toward the question of regularity in population growth. In these investigations he had as collaborator Dr. L. J. Reed, a mathematician of the highest ability. Their results have been so important that the eminent English statistician, Yule, not long since made them the subject of his presidential address before one of the great British scientific societies. They found that population growth obeys the mathematical law which describes those complicated chemical reactions where enzymes are present, the law which also describes the growth of individuals throughout the plant and the animal kingdoms. Indeed Verhulst had used this identical expression nearly a century ago to interpret population increase, but this fact was unknown to Pearl and Reed until long after they had made their own computations. And, as a matter of fact, they have carried their own analysis to lengths undreamed of in Verhulst's philosophy. What they have been able to show is simply this. Under any given system of culture, populations grow in such a way that they may be fitted to a symmetrical curve having upper and lower limits. Constructive factors are met for a time, and population increases rapidly up to a certain point; then destructive or limiting factors come to the fore with increasing speed and population growth diminishes until finally a saturation point is reached. Different races and different environments give curves of different values, but these curves are similar in kind. And wars, famine, and pestilence change the gen-

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eral trend but slightly. This is a peculiarity of human herds that is interesting and that can be made useful. It tells us, nationally and racially, about where we shall probably stop our race for numbers; thus giving us a wholly new outlook on social problems. We are in a position to predict with some degree of accuracy where we are going and when we shall arrive and to act upon the knowledge. For the first time we can say when a population reaches that optimum which gives every individual the greatest opportunity for personal happiness. Whether we shall take the necessary steps to circumvent Nature and keep ourselves at this point is another matter.

These demonstrations form the first part of the book. Then comes an endeavor to answer the question as to why populations develop as they do. This problem the author undertakes to investigate by a laboratory study of fruit-fly colonies, hoping thus to get information that would serve as a key to the same riddle when human beings are in question. Various races were raised and their vital statistics observed and noted. The rise and fall of nations recorded in a laboratory notebook, their national territories being one-pint milk bottles! To see exactly how much light is here thrown on various abstruse matters connected with population growth, one must turn to the book itself. In spite of the fact that fruit-flies and man are quite differently organized, their population growth is much the same. It is apparently controlled by identical laws. One need mention only one of the important conclusions which emerges. Density of flies shows down growth, just as density of people shows down growth; but in the case of the flies it can be shown that food supply is not the sole limiting factor as has been supposed by some investigators of human population increase. Perhaps the mere sight of so many stupid faces here, there, and everywhere depresses fecundity; and both flies and man react to the cause.

The third part of this exposition is concerned with an analysis of the bearing of the sex habits of Algerians on the growth of their population. The data are drawn largely from a recent memoir by Bunle, and are used because they are part of an unusual case history "which offers both adequate records and clean-cut racial and social discontinuities on a scale of respectable statistical magnitude." Perhaps the most important conclusion here is that during recent years the birth rate in Algeria has fallen markedly, although it is "known to be essentially uninfluenced by the intentional practice of contraceptive measures." Whether this conclusion is justified or not, it is difficult to say. One has the feeling that the use of intentional birth control measures is not necessarily precluded either by the relative ignorance or by the religion of the native Algerians. It is hardly a "known" quantity.

The "differential birthrate" and the effect of sex habits on reproduction are discussed in the concluding chapters. One might suppose that those are disconnected fragments of the subject, but this is really not so. The author believes that the evidence reveals an extraordinary correlation between poverty and the deathrate unconnected with ignorance and want of foresight, and he suggests that the poor man's wealth of children is the result of a high sex activity which is given full rein because of the absence of numerous social and intellectual interests available only to the well-to-do. Actual data on average sex experience, as reported here, are novel records for science. They are important records which ought to be common in order for the physician to have a basis for advice which he is often asked to give and is now unable to give. Pearl has made a start, but only a start, for, as he himself rather laments, his records were hospital records all made by old men from memory. How significant they are no one will know until additional compilations are available; but one is inclined to feel that old men are poor witnesses on this score. In memory they have become either Casanovas or St. Pauls,— usually the former.

Altogether this is a book which deserves and which will have a circulation much larger than among physicians and scientists. The author is one of our most eminent scientists and the subject is one of our greatest riddles. It is a sign of a new era when a publisher like Knopf, whose Borzoi lists have shown no entries of a scientific nature, should endeavor to give a technical book to a wider audience.

The Bowling Green

THE Green is very pleased by several letters about Stella Benson. Boston writes:

You surely must own some objects which though perhaps not of tremendous intrinsic value have, because of what seems to be a fragility, real or imaginary, caused you to take unusual care of them. When a friend comes to visit and pauses to admire such objects, you perhaps, like myself, hover over them anxiously as he handles them, fearing lest in some way he injure them.

Now this is exactly the way I feel about Stella Benson. I have timidly dared to give her work to two or three friends who I thought would be most appreciative but there has always been a reservation in my mind as to whether or not I ought. Probably, though, she is fine enough not to be spoiled even then.

About a year ago when my fiancée and I were first discovering that we cared more for one another than probably any two people ever did before, she gave me a book to read on my trip back from visiting her. The book was "This Is the End." It was an old edition by Macmillan in a curious simple binding and with the musty smell that books of about ten years back seem to achieve. At that time, of course, I was most struck by the more sentimental parts of the book, particularly the verse about "None can spoil the day that I have made." The quality of the whole thing was positively thrilling and as we jolted along in the coach, lighted by oil lamps, I quite fogot where I was and quite forgot, too, that I was going in the wrong direction.

This book became with us a sort of fetish. It was "our" book and we were very much discouraged when we found it impossible to buy a copy in any of the better Boston book stores. They all reported it was out of print. Accordingly, I urged my own store to get me a copy at almost any price within decent reason, regardless of its condition from previous usage. Nothing happened and finally an accidentally dropped word let H. K., who had owned the copy we had read, know of our plight. He very kindly and sacrificially gave it to us. So now it occupies the place of honor.

Of course when "Pipers and a Dancer" came out I hastened to give it to my fiancée but it somehow failed to give us the same quality of joy that the earlier one had. It was Stella Benson but not our Stella Benson. So now I am glad to know that there is another which perhaps will have the spirit of the old.

It is surprising, of course, to know that Mr. Michael Arlen likes Stella Benson, yet I think after consideration one can see why. I am quite sure that your "raccoon-coated" students about to depart for New Haven and Boston will not care one bit for her. I am glad they won't.

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Wilmington writes:

On your recommendation, I bought and read Stella Benson's "This Is the End." It is delicious, poignant, fine, Then I had to buy and read "A Poor Man." It is gorgeous —simply gorgeous. Now I have to buy all the rest. Damn you!

CHRISTOPHER WARD

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THE HOLE IN THE STOCKING

"Well, then," said the Christmas fairies, making up their lists, "What would you give to an author who is writing a book?"

"The Gift of Solitude," said one; "that among the humorous multitudes of men he may pass unknown and unsuspected; I mean unsuspected even by his best friends who shall never guess the loving judgments of his heart. The man who is unknown can never be interrupted, except occasionally by his better demon."

"You are too cryptic," cried a volatile fairy, tossing her tiny package into the stocking. "I give him the gift of Folly: that he may always behave worse than himself and know himself an ass. He must know himself incapable of dealing with this shrewd perplexing world; outwitted on every hand, always in the wrong; this will give him those midnight sweats and horrors that are such good laxatives; it will give him humility, and adoration for those greater than himself, so that he will fall on his knees where no one sees him but never in public. Yes, I give him the golden seed of Folly and pray he may be wise enough to cherish it."

"It's a fairy's duty to be cryptic," suggested a third. "I give him the gift of Grace: that, being (as you have made him) a fool, he may yet mock other fools without unbearable offense, showing by the tone of his mockery that he includes himself in the discipline. Without Grace he is nought but a clown driving his pate on stone walls; he must have the gift of elusive words that change color while you look at them; he must walk a mile for a chameleon."

"The gift of Disregard," announced a stern-looking fairy whose coat was buttoned up to his chin. "He must learn to pay no attention to what anyone says, not to be abashed by praise nor puffed up by attack; these are the great faults of authors. Certainly he must never subscribe to a clipping bureau."

"The gift of Patience," said another, putting in a queer-shaped parcel. "It looks a good deal like laziness, and will often be so considered. But it means that he must let his work take its own time, never be hurried by landlords or editors, be not too depressed if it does not seem to spread and sparkle on the page as it should, be content to let it ferment and work inwardly until the time has come. This is a sharp-edged gift and will not always be relished by our friend."

"You are too darned solemn," interrupted a young fairy with an Eton cut and so debonair a mien that even among fairies she was held to be a bit irresponsible. "For goodness' sake, give the poor fish something he can cash in on; give him Mirth; the kind of laughter that started from a star so distant that it hasn't reached us yet; let him be inventive in laughter as scientists are in physics; golly, there must be all sorts of undiscovered merriments; I think it's terrible to be still laughing at the same jokes that Chaucer started; give him the gift of the Absurd."

"Cash in on?" exclaimed a disillusioned-looking sprite. "Child, what leads you to think that a new kind of Mirth would be profitable? Give him Self-Forgetfulness, that he may enjoy the world with reverence and peace, and blot out for a while from his busy mind that hellish awareness of himself. Let him have room in his heart to pity others and lie hidden in a dream."

They fell to wrangling as to which of their various gifts would be most valuable to their beneficiary.

"These are all very intangible presents," said one. "I'd give him a sagacious publisher and leave the rest to luck, mice, and oblivion."

"Besides," remarked an observant fairy, "there's a big hole in the toe of his stocking, most of these little packages of ours will slip right through it."

"We'd better mend it," said a domestic-minded fairy, getting out her sewing bag.

"Yes, it ought to be mended, that's his particular weakness, his—."

"Gracious!" said Santa, coming down the chimney with a crash. "Don't mend that! If it weren't for that the poor devil would never write at all."

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Back to the Indian

(*Continued from page* 425)

tion, and progress are equally degrading. These books are not history, not even good sense, especially when the author regards the sober march of civilization across the continent as an unfortunate curtailing of savage liberty, and puts his curse on his native land because he is not allowed to dance naked in the moonlight around a broached rum cask in Gramercy Park; yet there is poetry in them, the poetry of revolt against smugness and too much dull living. It is poetry, but rather muddy poetry. The return to paganism is likely to be rosier in theory than in practice. There is undoubtedly much to cause discontent in the spectacle of America as the fatted calf among the nations, but to choose rampageous Indians and political reprobates as ancestral models by way of a change from puritans, Quakers, and Virginia gentlemen is to strike a Parisian attitude which seems a little absurd in New York.

Ladislas Reymont, who became famous when "The Peasants," an epic tale of modern Poland in four complete and independent novels, "Autumn," "Winter," "Spring," and "Summer," won the 1924 Nobel prize in literature, died a few days ago. He was born in 1868 in what was formerly Russian Poland. One of twelve children of poor parents, he went to a public school, conducted under the Russian government's supervision, where it was absolutely forbidden to speak Polish. As Reymont was unwilling to obey this injunction, he was expelled from one school after another, until he was finally forced to give up his studies. He started his business career as a clerk in a store; then became a telegraph operator, then actor in a travelling stock company; a railroad clerk; a farmer; and even thought of becoming a clergyman and spent several months in the monastery of the Paulist Fathers at Chenstohova.

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Books of Special Interest

Scottish Speech

SCOTTISH SPEECH AND POETRY Scottish Poems of Robert Burns in his Native Dialect. By SIR JAMES WILSON. New York: Oxford University Press. 1925. $2.50.

THE NORTHERN MUSE. An Anthology of Scots Vernacular Poetry. Arranged by JOHN BUCHAN. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1925. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON
Smith College

IN SPITE of the pre-eminence of Scottish poetry among the literary products of the various dialects of English, scientific study of the sounds and idiom of the northern vernacular has lagged behind that of the speech of some of the southern districts. More than a century ago a foundation for the study of the vocabulary was laid in Jamieson's Dictionary, but a remaking of this work in the light of modern linguistic scholarship is long overdue. About fifty years ago, Dr. J. A. H. Murray gave a model for the necessary preliminary local studies in his "Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland," but imitators in other sections have been slow to appear. Meantime, the local dialects are passing, and there is a risk that unless vigorous action is taken, the spread of Board School English will have destroyed the possibility of gathering the requisite data.

Fortunately there is evidence that note is being taken of the emergency. Mr. William Grant and his collaborators have already shown that scholars with adequate equipment are in the field, and ten years ago, Sir James Wilson paralleled Dr. Murray's work with a study of the speech of Lower Strathearn. In 1923 he followed this with "The Dialect of Robert Burns as spoken in Central Ayrshire." Assuming that in the hundred and forty years since Burns published his first volume, the speech of his native county has changed little, Sir James Wilson has studied this speech in the mouths of old people who have never lived elsewhere and whose lives stretch halfway back to Burns. The present volume is an edition of Burns's best known poems, accompanied by a phonetic transcription, and a free translation into modern English. Thus for the first time it is possible for a non-Scotch reader to learn to pronounce Burn's words very much as the poet did. There remains, of course, the very important element of intonation and modulation which can still only be heard from those who have spoken the dialect in childhood, but what Wilson has done was very much worth doing, and he has done it in scholarly fashion.

♣ ♣

In accounts of the dialect of Burns's Scottish poems, it is usually assumed that they are written in the speech which Burns used and heard at home. This assumption is somewhat rudely shaken by Mr. John Buchan in the introduction to his new Anthology. Burns (he says) is by universal admission one of the most natural of poets, but he used a language which was, even in his own day, largely exotic. His Scots was not the living speech of his countrymen, like the English of Shelley, and—in the main—the Scots of Dunbar; it was a literary language subtly blended from the old "makars" and the refrains of folk poetry, much tinctured with the special dialect of Ayrshire, and with a solid foundation of English, accented *more Boreali*. No Scot in the later eighteenth century, whether in Poosie Nensie's or elsewhere, spoke exactly as Burns wrote.

At first sight this theory, if accepted, might seem to render futile such labors as those of Sir James Wilson in the book just described. But Wilson's contribution is largely a matter of phonetics and Mr. Buchan does not mean to imply that Burns did not intend his countrymen to pronounce his words according to their usual custom. He is thinking mainly of vocabulary and idiom, and even in this field he is not so radical as he sounds. In spite of an incautious phrase he would probably allow that no Englishman in the early nineteenth century spoke exactly as Shelley wrote. Most poets go afield hunting for fine words, rich in sound or association, and most poetry is tinged with the archaic and exotic. In the vernacular revival of the eighteenth century, Ramsay, Fergusson, Burns, and the rest salvaged many a word and phrase from the older national poetry, and they selected as all artists select. The fact that during the seventeenth century Scottish had declined as a literary medium made the language used in the renaissance somewhat more apart from colloquial speech than is normally the case; but I am inclined to think that the difference is more one of degree than of kind, and to feel that Mr. Buchan over-emphasizes when he says that Burns's dicton "was a creation, not the reproduction of a speech still in the ears of men."

All of this has little to do with the merits of Mr. Buchan's Anthology. It is, as an anthology should be, a labor of love, and the editor frankly admits it was made to please himself and with no other purpose. It is arrayed according to subject, and is a delight to browse in. I know of no collection of Scottish verse with so high a percentage of cream. The glossarial footnotes give what is necessary for understanding, and the commentary supplies clues for further reading and contains much pleasant philosophizing and acute criticism. Altogether a delightful volume.

Pepys the Man

SAMUEL PEPYS: A Portrait in Miniature. By J. LUCAS-DUBRETON. Translated from the French by H. J. STENNING. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1925. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILBUR C. ABBOTT
Harvard University

FROM a surprisingly small list of books M. Lucas-Dubreton has written a surprisingly entertaining account of the diarist Pepys. A pretty considerable acquaintance with Gramont, a knowledge of Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature," a dip into Clarendon and another—astonishing enough—into Neal; a dash of Macaulay and, oddly enough again, of "Roderick Random"; a well-worn quotation from Carlyle to grace a footnote; these have been drawn to garnish the dish with a spice of references. But first and last the "Diary" of Samuel Pepys. Not all of the "Diary," chiefly that part which is more or less scandalous, seems to have provided him with his material; and the least creditable part of it with the impression he leaves of the great Secretary.

It is no part of a historian, not even of a reviewer, to gloss over the escapades of the great, the near great, or of any one else. Yet it would be far short of the truth to take this portrait of Pepys as a true one. It is, as it were, only the seamy side of the canvas. It is, if one may venture to consider such a lively trifle seriously, a little out of date. If the author knew more of Pepys than he has put in his book—and he evidently knows a great deal more—he might have made this a better account of even the man Pepys than it is, for even that man had his greater side. It would not have been so amusing from one point of view, but it would have been not only more truly interesting, and a very much better piece of portraiture. It is now fashionable to exhibit the greater figures of the world in undress, to stress the littlenesses of the greatest. We are—so one learns—to have the worst of Greville spread for our edification. There is a whole crusade to denobilize men and women of the past. Scandal has become a profitable publishing item, one must judge, and indiscretion the first qualification of authorship.

But as for Pepys, entertaining as the author's pages are, great as is his literary skill, novel as it may seem to those who have not read the "Diary," the current rather runs the other way just now. One may not venture to say with the greatest living Pepysian that "the 'Diary' has always been overrated," but it is certain that in the light of that scholar's own work as well as that of others, this figure which M. Lucas-Dubreton gives us is, as it were, a bit out of drawing, viewed as a portrait. That, he may well claim, was not his purpose. He draws what he sees in the "Diary," supplementing it from what sources he likes. It is not his purpose to instruct but to amuse. And if Pepys was the kind of a man he has portrayed himself, if he did the things he did, and was foolish enough to set them down, if an audience may be entertained by the raking up of the *chronique scandaleuse* of Charles II, why insist that Watteau should paint battle-scenes or Fragonard the virtuous employments of the worthy poor? It is ungracious and unkind; it is even the part of dull respectability to insist that a lively picture should look like a man. One must pay homage to M. Lucas-Dubreton's literary skill; yet one need not therefore agree with him that he has turned it to the best use. For surely here, if ever, the evil that Pepys did lives after him, the good has been interred with his bones. Even for a miniature this portrait is too small.

The Russian People

THE SHADOW OF THE GLOOMY EAST. By FERDINAND A. OSSENDOWSKY. Translated by F. B. CZARNOMSKY. New York: E. P. Dutton Co. 1925.

Reviewed by PITIKIM SOROKIN
Author of "Leaves from a Russian Diary"

IF Ossendowsky's books are taken as fiction then his "Beasts, Men and Gods" and "Man and Mystery in Asia" are absorbingly interesting and valuable. Taken as scientific description his books do not warrant the praise and commendation that they do from the standpoint of fiction. "The Shadow of the Gloomy East" furnishes proof of this statement. The book, which has a somewhat romantic title, represents an attempt to characterize the Russian people. This characterization is quite worthy of a second class newspaper man. Ossendowsky stimulated, it seems, by the success which the "mysteries" and "romanticism" of his preceding books had among readers, continues to supply them in this book. In order to get these "mysteries" and exotic things he proceeds very simply. He chooses the beliefs or customs which existed three hundred years ago in Russia and describes them as existing now. The traits which belong to few individuals or to a small group, he ascribes to the Russian people generally. Is it strange therefore that the Russian people in his characterization appear as "mysterious," "Asiatic," "hostile and dangerous to mankind" or as "the naked man upon the naked earth," like "the Russians" whom I have seen occasionally in the American movies?

According to Ossendowsky the Russian villages are full of wizards, sorcerers, and hags. Everywhere there are shamans and fortune-tellers. A special caste of "poisoners" has been cultivated in this "mysterious" country. According to this description the industry of horse stealing was highly developed in Russia. Even such a common thing as transportation by horses—"yamshchina"—he has succeeded in depicting as "a mysterious relic of olden times." Simple fishermen, under his too vivid description, are transformed into "sinister, wildly romantic characters—the buccaneers." This characterization demands further that there be "the brutes and cave men," mediæval floggers, mystics, and utterly immoral heroes. Ossendowsky meets this demand and creates "the devil's feast," "black ravens," and "old gods." In brief, if I try to characterize the American people by taking the Mormons' customs as typical of the American family, the adventists as the representatives of American religion, the Negroes as the American race, the Loeb and Leopold case as the proof of the existence in America of a "highly developed kidnaping industry" and so on,—my picture of the American people would be as good as Ossendowsky's picture of the Russian people. His book is a good "story" for a magazine section of a perfectly "yellow" newspaper.

This review could be finished at this point if there were not one charge conspicuously stressed by the author. This is the extreme brutality and cruelty ascribed to the Russian nation as a characteristic trait. We have heard the same statement from many friends of the Soviet rulers who in this way have tried to justify the cruelties of the Soviet régime. How far is this statement true? I think it is quite erroneous. It is true that the cruelties of the Russian revolution have been terrible. But all great revolutions—the Greek and the Roman, the German, French, Bohemian, English, and many others—were accompanied by the same degree of bestiality. In this respect the Russian revolution is not an exception. But, we may ask, who performed these cruelties in the Russian Revolution? The author himself points out that among the troops of the Cheka were Russians, Jews, Letts, Poles, Hungarians, Germans, Chinese, and the dregs of all nationalities. Who compose the Third International or the Soviet Government? It is composed not so much of the Russians as of these dregs of all countries. The Russian people have been the victims rather than the authors of the terrors. Was it not from Western Europe that the Marxian theories were imported into Russia and applied there by Marxian pupils? Where, in Asia or in Europe, did that brilliant example of "christianity and humanism" styled the rGeat War originate? Taking into consideration these and many similar facts—among them comparative statistics of crimes and punishments in Russia and European countries before the revolution—we must say that Ossendowsky's accusation is at least hypocritical. If there were not in Russia at present so many foreign "saviors" and "Kulturträger" in the form of Soviet rulers, foreign communists and socialists, pro-bolshevist writers and sympathizers, adventurers, and profiteers of all countries, the process of normalization and moral and mental regeneration of the Russian nation which has already begun would proceed much faster.

American Annals

A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN PEOPLE. By ROBERT GRANVILLE CALDWELL. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1925. $2.50.

Reviewed by RALPH V. HARLOW
Boston University

IN view of the recent increase in the number of these briefer histories of the United States—brief at least in comparision with Professor Channing's monumental work—it may reasonably be expected that a new offering of the sort will be marked by certain attributes of peculiarity or excellence, by something at least to distinguish it from others of its kind. People who have read, and libraries which have bought, "short histories" of similar scope may well ask on what grounds they should be favored with another.

The author of this latest contribution, Professor Robert Granville Caldwell, modestly, and sensibly, makes no special claim to distinction. His publishers, less modestly, offer the book as "at once an economic, political, and human interpretation," which takes into consideration "all the data that recent research has brought to light." The book itself proves to be a good, clear summary, or full outline, of the majority of the standard episodes in American history, from the European background to the eve of the Civil War. If critics carp at the omission of the Spanish Armada, for instance, or at the barest possible reference to William Lloyd Garrison, they may be silenced by the retort courteous: what do you expect in five hundred pages? Anyway, if some of the regular stock in trade is omitted, no disconcerting new exhibits are allowed to appear.

The section dealing with the colonies and the American Revolution will probably attract unfavorable comment, for here the author reveals no adequate grasp of his subject. The meeting of the first House of Burgesses did not by any means prove that "the Colonists had gained the right to govern and tax themselves," nor was South Carolina a "rice plantation" at the start. As for Chapter VI, "The Rising Quarrel," it might have been pieced together by anybody with the help of Montgomery's "Leading Facts" and a few other equally reprehensible elementary texts. The account of the Boston Massacre is merely poor, but the unsupported assertion that public opinion held Governor Hutchinson responsible for it is absurd. Then come the old stories of Franklin's "full dress suit of spotted Manchester Velvet," of the tea in Charleston left "to rot in a warehouse," and, later of Ethan Allen's demand for surrender "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." The inclusion of these shopworn fragments would not in itself damage the work, even though they are not true; but the whole chapter is made up of generalizations, every one of which is open to serious question.

The period after 1783 is handled with more evidence of knowledge of facts, and of familiarity with "recent research," although an occasional curious blunder crops out here. The War of 1812, the struggle with Mexico, and the controversy over slavery are in general well done. And twice in the book, once in the summary of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and again in the analysis of the figures for the presidential election of 1860, the author puts old material in a new light.

But the volume as a whole lacks character. It will give the reader no information that he cannot get just as easily, and more entertainingly, somewhere else; it will not stir his emotions, nor arouse his enthusiasm. It is marked neither by profundity of thought nor by brilliancy of generalization. The style is clear, but uninspiring, there are no epigrams, no vivid characterizations, no phrases or sentences that one feels impelled to quote, still less to remember. It is an example of mediocrity, not distressing, but of little real worth, not vivid enough for the general reader, and not informing enough for the scholar.

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Books of Special Interest

The Drama of Man

CHAINS. By HENRI BARBUSSE. New York: International Publishers. 1925. 2 vols. $4.

Reviewed by V. F. CALVERTON

HOWEVER inadequate as a novel and unscientific as sociology, "Chains" is one of the most unique creations of the chaotic post-bellum years of our century. Where "Light," "The Inferno," and "Under Fire" fell easily within the category of the novel, "Chains" bafflingly evades all of the flexible nomenclature of literary classification. Despite its prose form, it is a poetical interpretation of the historical struggles of humanity. Suffering from what seems almost an infinitude of redundancies, the book, nevertheless, achieves in places a symphonic resonance of style and a vigorous analysis of social substance. Incoherent and bewildering in structure, it attains a unity of sentiment if not of situation.

"Chains," according to its author, attacks "directly the whole tremendous drama of man deployed across the centuries; (it) stirs the science of history, its complexity and obscurity, its jungle of cyphers and of names whose meaning has been lost." It is "the terrible homogeneity of history" that Barbusse attempts to picture in such wild, impassioned, and dithyrambic diction. The work is a protest against the cruelty and injustice of life and civilization. It is the chains that fetter man, that thwart life, which obsess the author's fancy, evoke his wrath, and aggravate his denunciations. A socialist, Barbusse is opposed to all war unless it be in the interests of the submerged classes of society. Like Rolland he attacked this past war with the vehemence of a prophet. The political intrigue and commercial chicanery involved drove him to attack every nation concerned, in fact the entire industrial system which has fettered man's hopes and perverted his ideals. In "Chains" Barbusse points this industrial society as in a twilight state of dissolution. The struggle of the many against the few, of the proletariat against the *bourgeoisie*, harbingers the end of contemporary society, the conclusion of another social system. Barbusse's radicalism is unabashed and courageous. The hope of man lies in the Social Revolution. The advance of the human race demands the upheaval and extermination of capitalistic society. It is "a collective life that is at stake," a collective system that is exigent. Until the "vast mass has everything, it will have nothing."

Mingled with its radical pronunciamentos and annihilating logic, however, is an element of profound skepticism. While the wild cry "Workers of the World, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains" resounds through page after page of the epic, beneath it all there is ever rising and protruding the more philosophic if less practical issue: "What are we here for, here on earth?" Barbusse effects no clairvoyance, projects no answer. With all of the faith in the mass and the reconstruction of life through a new society, there is an inescapable melancholy that pervades the volumes, a vivid apprehension of the pain and torture of impermanency, death. . ."And the more we meet in each other's eyes, the more we think of death, for death will embrace all."

Perhaps no contemporary work can be said to possess a more sweeping and profound motivation. Yet with all of its magnificence of design, its epical extensity and power, as a novel "Chains" is not a success. It is without distinction of character or continuity of theme. Its very poetic extravangances and intellectual divagations weary by multiplication and tautology. The intense beauty of fragments is marred by the barrenness of wide stretches of description and argument. A severe condensation of substance would have given the book a finer appeal and its interpretation a deeper meaning and cogency.

Linguistics

WORDS AND IDIOMS. By LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1925. $2.

Reviewed by LOWRY CHARLES WIMBERLY
University of Nebraska

A WRITER on linguistics is usually a hero to no one, not even to a college president. Such a writer we are likely to felicitate not at all, that is, unless we chance to be specialists in philology. Even then we may have in mind nothing more than what a tremendous deal of work is represented between the covers of the book. We congratulate the author on having coming out alive. A work of this sort is in danger of being damned if it is readable. The expert neglects it; the lay reader lauds it, and in his praises justifies the opinion of the expert. The moral is that one should not make easy that which is difficult, or interesting that which is notoriously unentertaining. Was Professor Huxley's reputation helped in academic quarters by his ability to talk simply about profound matters? Anyway Mr. Smith scents danger and puts his book frankly outside the philologist's special field of inquiry.

Equipped, as he says, with whatever erudition a lexicographer may be supposed to have, Mr. Smith has written a book which may come within the interest of the man who does not know Sanskrit and who has never heard of Gothic. Not that the specialist will fail to take pleasure in "Words and Idioms." Such a one, if not utterly fossilized, will find something in the chapter on English sea terms and that on the English element in foreign languages. In any event, Mr. Smith's pages will revive for the scholar the romance of philology, the poetry of it. For the tyro it will have an effect similar to that given by a first view of astronomy. It will lure the beginner on to the higher levels. Astronomy is, for the amateur, a mixture of classic mythology, speculations about the Martians, and the distance in light-years between us and the farthest star. But it is possible to get along without Verner's law and higher mathematics while accompanying Mr. Smith on his linguistic adventures.

This delver after words digs down into our old sea-vocabulary and examines those deposits of sea-terms left in the language of English sailors. He finds a stratum of Anglo-Saxon or early English words, such as *gangway*, and *fore* and *aft*. The Scandinavian layer of our nautical vocabulary is represented by *keel*, *raft*, and *tug*, as well as by a number of other terms. By way of France come the Homeric *dolphin*, *prow*, and *ocean*. There are elements also from Latin, Arabic, Italian, and Dutch. The conglomerate character of the English language prevails in its nautical terms, as elsewhere, and Mr. Smith's sailors give our borrowings dramatic portrayal. But we have lent as well as borrowed; witness the author's chapter on "English Words Abroad." A tiny and elfin history of literary criticism is acted out by the word *romantic* in another chapter, "Four Romantic Words." The section "Popular Speech and Standard English" discourses charmingly on dialects. The last chapter is a highly profitable discussion—amply illustrated—of English idioms, and there is an appendix containing two hundred "Somatic Idioms," expressions having to do with the head, the hair, and so on. In the preface Mr. Smith acknowledges his debt to the "Oxford Dictionary," to Dr. Jespersen, and to Remy de Gourmont's "Esthetique de la Langue Française." And throughout the book there are other learned references to assure the reader that "Words and Idioms," though entertaining, is not without sound scholarship.

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An Australian Author

By VANCE PALMER

WHEN Henry Lawson died in Sydney a couple of years ago, the event aroused no comment in the literary world, for except in his own country Lawson was practically an unknown writer. Perhaps that was partly due to the nature of his talent. Most readers of English ask for bulk, and Lawson only wrote short stories. They were original enough, it is true, to attract attention in France, and to cause a monograph to be written about him in Germany, but they had not sufficient "punch" and immediacy to capture a public that had become used to the jolting attack of Kipling and O. Henry. Besides, after the intense cultivation of the short story in the 'nineties, there was a period when they were looked upon with slight contempt, and had to live or die by their capacity to appeal to the public that reads magazines. Not until the present day have writers been allowed to make a literary reputation by their short stories alone.

Lawson suffered under another disadvantage, as far as the purely English public was concerned. He was local, rooted in a soil that was not English loam. In writing about Australia, he did not adopt the point-of-view of the expatriated Englishman, giving vignettes of a strange, "colonial" world. There has been a fair amount of such writing, on one plane or another, from Henry Kingsley's "Geoffrey Hamlyn" to D. H. Lawrence's "The Boy in the Bush," with gulfs of melodramatic rubbish between, and the point of it for an English reader is that it makes things easy by giving a vision of unfamiliar landscapes and characters seen through eyes similar to his own. A novelty that is purely one of subject-matter is attractive and comprehensible—but when the eyes are strange and a little alien that is another question. Lawson could not have adopted the conventional point-of-view of an English gentleman, even if he had wanted to, for apart from his talent he was something quite different. The son of a Norwegian workman and a pioneering mother, he was about as remote from the English circle of ideas as, say, the early Gorky, and the audience he wrote for was not one of circulating-library readers but shearers, stockmen, bushmen of all kinds, in fact the class of men he knew best and had always moved among. The unpretentious titles of some of his books—"Joe Wilson and his Mates," "While the Billy Boils," "On the Track and over the Sliprails"—reveal his scope and method of approach to his subject and his audience. He was what might be called a "democratic" writer.

This gives his stories a great piquancy and value, for such democratic writing is not common. In England there is a certain tradition about the treatment of working-class people in fiction. Whether they are presented sympathetically or not, they must be seen from the height of the middle-class reader, and consequently they come out either as comic or pathetic figures, never quite as real human beings. They have crystallized into types—the butler, the charwoman, the gamekeeper, the Cockney hawker—and we know what they are going to say as soon as they open their mouths. Even in Galsworthy, who uses them systematically as the dark shadows of his Forsytes and Pendyces, with the same passions and failings, they remain the shadows of his intention; perfect in form, but lacking authentic flesh and blood.

In America democratic writing is more common, for the audience is varied and diffused, but no writer of quality has been produced who can bridge all classes, W. D. Howells is not read in the Bronx, nor Henry James by the farmers of Kansas. It is not a damning criticism of a writer, of course, to say that he fails to bridge the different classes, but when this rare power occurs in work of quality it is worth probing. And Lawson's distinction can be illustrated by the fact that he earned the warm praise of a penetrating critic like Edward Garnett, and novelists like Conrad and Galsworthy on the one hand, and the enthusiasm of the people he wrote about on the other.

What was the cause of this varied appeal? It seems to lie in something naïve and sincere in his work, something more common among Scandinavian and Russian writers than Anglo-Saxon ones. Lawson's subject-matter was limited, but he always looked at it with eyes that were peculiarly his own, penetrating it to the core. Never for a moment was he tempted to falsify his own view of things for the sake of adapting himself to some imaginary patron of a circulating-library. There is his story, "The Drover's Wife," for instance, a slight thing, but unforgettable. A woman left with a pack of young children on a lonely farm has an encounter with a snake late one afternoon, and sees it escape under the slab flooring of the hut. Darkness and the children going to bed, with the eldest boy, aged ten, rebellious at not being allowed to explore for the snake, and the bright, beady eyes seeming to peer out from every chink! There is nothing for the woman to do but sit up all night, with a stick on the table beside her and her dog at her feet, waiting for the enemy. There by the light of an oil-lamp, brooding over an old fashion-paper, she lets her life roll by her in images. Overwork and loneliness, with a continual struggle to keep the flimsy home together for the sake of the children and the happy-go-lucky husband who is away droving! But in spite of her jaded nerves, she is never allowed to become a mere figure of pathos, and when the snake emerges at midnight, tempted by a saucer of milk, she is ready at hand with her stick.

It is the way such frail material is used that stamps Lawson as a delicate and original artist. In the space of a few pages, character and individuality are given to the woman, the children, even to the dog, so that the whole scene is fixed ineffaceably in our memory. And whenever possible he salts his descriptions with a quiet humor. Nothing that could make the situation real and moving is lost, and yet there is no effect of overstrain. Lawson's sure touch in seizing on whatever details are significant allows him to produce an impression out of all proportion to the number of words he uses, and the apparent importance of his theme.

In descriptions of Nature (Chekov wrote to his brother Alexander) one has to snatch at small details, grouping them in such a manner that after reading them one can obtain the picture on closing one's eyes. For instance, you will get a moonlight night if you write that on the dam of the mill a fragment of broken bottle flashed like a small, bright star, and there rolled by the shadow of a dog or a wolf—and so on.

Lawson never brooded over his art like Chekov, but he seems to have arrived at the same methods of economy by a sort of instinct. He was largely an untutored writer, and this had its bad and good sides. The bad side is obvious. Few writers have enough inherent genius to be able to dispense with the discipline and restraint that come from a study of the best models, and Lawson occasionally becomes vague and subjective, losing grip of his theme. On the other hand, he probably gained something by keeping his literary sense uncontaminated. Our Anglo-Saxon world is flooded with so much loose, promiscuous writing that many a promising talent is submerged by it. There is the temptation to assume a sophisticated point-of-view, to write anonymously in the phrases of the newspapers and magazines, to seek the lowest common denominator of a mixed audience. The only writers who seem to have influenced Lawson were Dickens and Bret Harte, and the direct results of this influence were not happy. His natural humor was not breezy and robust, but mordant and penetrating. Once he wrote a story, "Send Round the Hat," that contained more than a memory of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," and it is illuminating to watch his own *flair* for reality struggling with the rather romanticized material he had borrowed.

Now that there has been a revival of the short story, and a renewed interest in the form, it is a pity that Henry Lawson's work should not be more widely known. His talent was, in its way, unique in English. And though a rigid selection of his best work would not fill more than a couple of volumes, that would prove a sufficiently rich harvest.

Foreign Notes

PRESIDENT Masaryk has now added his reminiscences on the war to those that are so rapidly multiplying. His "Der Welt Revolution: Erinnerungen and Betrachtungen (Berlin: Reiss) is a volume of large interest and no small importance. In it President Masaryk not only reviews his own life modestly and briefly but he writes at length of the various European nations as he saw them during the war. A sociologist trained to observe and accustomed to generalize, his reflections on the civilization that was passing through the ordeal of battle are of exceptional interest. Unfortunately, however, for the average reader, the philosophizing which is based on so genuine and varied a knowledge is presented in difficult fashion. Apparently Masaryk has not the ability to translate into clear and simple form the ideas that throng his pages. Nevertheless his book is an important work.

The first volume of a series entitled "Beitrage zur Geschichten der Deutschen Kunst," edited by Ernst Buchner and Karl Fruchtmayr, has just appeared under the title "Oberdeutsche Kunst der Spätgothik und Reformationszeit (Augsburg: Filser). The volume contains about two dozen contributions by different writers but has a quite unwonted unity for a book of the kind. It is an excellent and scholarly study of upper German art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The first volume of a German series that parallels the British "History of Civilization" and the French "Evolution de l'Humanité" has just been issued by Perthes of Stuttgart: "Einleitung und Geschichte des Alten Orients," by E. Hanslik, E. Kohn, E. G. Klauber, and C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, as it is called, is a scientific work, so oriented that the ebb and flow of civilization is constantly held in the forefront of interest.

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Points of View

A Serious Question

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

May I ask a question?

I never knew an editor, or a critic. I never wrote an editor but once, and he very properly ignored me. I am only writing now because I know you have one or two other readers who are as puzzled as I am.

I am almost entirely self-educated. As a boy, I worshipped Charles Dickens, and, to a lesser degree, Mark Twain and Walter Scott. "Pickwick Papers" was one of my earliest books—I was hardly more than six when I read it and "Tom Sawyer"; and by and bye "Oliver Twist" and "David Copperfield"—how I cried over Agnes! —and "Martin Chuzzlewit" and "Huckleberry Finn." When I was selling papers, as a poor boy, in Washington City, I saved my pennies and bought all of Scott—and bought him, too, sometimes when I needed a meal. A little later I read all of Dickens—all I could find anywhere at any rate —and I have read him over and over many and many a time—and some two or three of Charles Lever, in whom I thoroughly delighted—Major Monsoon, you know, and the six bottle veterans of the Peninsula War. "Gil Blas" succeeded, and after Dickens—always first in my affections—"Don Quixote." Some of Balzac—not all—Victor Hugo, both plays and novels; to a certain extent, but he has a fatal lack of humor—the elder Dumas (I have stayed awake all night reading him); Smollett in certain humors of high farce, as the journey through France in "Peregrine Pickle"—and, pre-eminently, "Tom Jones." I have a mild liking for some of the more exciting of Stevenson's stories. He never could hold a candle to either Scott or Dumas, at either's best. I devoured Shakespeare at fifteen or sixteen, and have read him often since—especially the broader comedies, and "Macbeth" and "Lear"; Ben Jonson, all his plays —very tiresome, at times; all of Massinger and Beaumont and Fletcher—at least the books said they were complete; went to sleep over Ford and Webster and Chapman, and some times over Marlowe; a large number of other Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas, and all of Wycherley, Congreve, Farquahar and Vanbrugh, besides some of the other Restoration and Georgian dramatists. I have a certain liking for the broader poems of Chaucer, some of the tales, not the most refined, in the "Decameron," the "Heptameron," the "Droll Tales," etc; was at one time under the influence of Voltaire and Lucian, and, slightly, of Swift. I delight most heartily in Rabelais, Robert Burns, Pepys, Herodotus, and Homer. Molière—though I like Aristophanes better—is the most wonderfully comic and poetic of dramatists. To me, the most tremendous tragedy is the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus; the finest novel, either "Martin Chuzzlewit" or "Don Quixote"—and then I think of "Pickwick Papers" and Rabelais, and I am uncertain. Incomparably the most delightful of all humorists, Charles Dickens. Oh, yes, and I like Thackeray and Charles Reade, and detest George Eliot and Edgar Allan Poe, and of late years have read history extensively, Mommsen and Gibbon and Thucydides and Froude and Polybius and Livy and Macaulay and Carlyle and Parkman and Motley and Prescott, etc. Give the palm to Gibbon; read Polybius's account of the Hannabalic War recently with the utmost avidity; and grow angry when I read that Macaulay's style was poor—I wish I could put the critic's writing beside the Hastings's trial! And I almost forgot Plato's "Symposium"—the description of Socrates—and Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans," and "Lorna Doone," and Sienkiewicz's "With Fire and Sword," and Tennyson, and Sophocles's "Œdipus Rex," and William DeMorgan's "Joseph Vance" and "Alice-for-Short" and "The Old Man's Youth"—I admit I cannot possibly read all his others. But I cannot run along this way forever—perhaps I have given you enough so that you may see the background, readily.

Now for six or seven or eight years or more I have been reading magazines and papers such as the *Dial* and the *New Republic* and the *Nation* and the *American Mercury*, and the *Yale Review*, and your paper—almost any book reviews and book news that I could get hold of. And I notice, almost unanimously, the reviewers praise books for which I do not, and cannot, care—books that, to be frank, I simply cannot read. I have bought many books on the strength of reviews in these papers—some on the strength of reviews in yours—and, in almost every instance, I have been utterly disappointed. Most of you praise some Russian or other —and I have tried Tolstoy and Chekov and Turgeniev and Gorki, and in all those many books—I never could actually read one—there is not a thing, not a thing, that interested me—save some of Tolstoy's chapters in "War and Peace" dealing with Napoleon, and the interest there was that I so thoroughly disagreed with Tolstoy's reading of Napoleon's character that my distaste gave a zest to the pages. Oh, dear, dear, those endless words about tasteless, characterless, meaningless persons with abominable names! Those books in which nothing happens; those dreary, dreary, savorless pages! I see that you say of "Madame Bovary," "Such inspired psychological analysis constitutes the greatest of all 'stories.'" Let me tell you my experience with "Madame Bovary" and "Salammbo." Two years ago, at Christmas, I bought them in St. Paul, expecting a treat. Alas, it was another case of being deceived by the reviewers! "Salammbo" is, actually, the most tiresome book I ever tried to read; I could not possibly keep awake; if I fell asleep once in the Pullman, on the long day's ride home, I fell asleep twenty times. And I am an omnivorous reader. "Madame Bovary" is disgusting—I am not a prude—I will swap Rabelais with any one—and, what is worse, an impossible bore. Story! Flaubert never knew the meaning of the term. If you want to induce the business man to read, please, please, do not try him with Flaubert. And Dreiser, and Zola, and Willa Cather! And the other day, I picked up *Harper's*, and here is Ernest Boyd—whoever he is—picking a quarrel with Dickens. He seems to be of the school of Harry Elmer Barnes and the other historians of the *American Mercury* —always discovering that accepted views—or any body else's views—are wrong. I understand his "supreme literary types" are Congreve and Jonathan Swift. Good Lord deliver us! He had it out with Shakespeare and Milton too not so long ago. Undoubtedly, a Flaubertist. And then the *Golden Book!* How, in the God's plenty of English literature—with stories such as Wandering Willie's Tale in "Redgauntlet," the Bagman's tale of the Dead Mail in "Pickwick," Charles Reade's "Wandering Heir"—I am only naming a very, very few—oh, Reade's "Christie Johnstone," "Peg Woffington," any number of Thackeray's Burlesques and Sketches—how the editors reconcile with their adulation of literature the choice of unreadable tales, or poor tenth rate tales, by Stewart Edward White, Booth Tarkington, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Alfred Henry Lewis, Tolstoy's drama, *ad nauseam*, I cannot imagine—unless the answer be, the editors are critics. I have almost come to where I shall flee a story that any critic recommends.

Now, this is a very serious question with me, and a very serious question with two or three friends of mine—men of wide reading over many years, men young enough yet, too, to receive new ideas, men whose tastes differ widely from mine, men of professional standing, who have flattered themselves that they were, in an humble, amateur way, judges of good literature.

The question is, are we, men such as my friends and I, wholly lacking in taste, wholly lacking in appreciation of literature, wholly unable to tell a good story when we read it, or, is there something wrong with the critics?

This question I submit to you humbly, and with recognition of the fact that this letter is already entirely too long.

JOHN M. KLINE

Glasgow, Montana.

Von Felix Fechenbach, who was secretary to the Bavarian revolutionary, Kurt Eisner, and was sentenced to imprisonment by a Bavarian court in 1922 on a charge of high treason, has produced a remarkable human document in the record of his experience which he presents in "Fechenbachs Zuchthausbuch" (Berlin: J. W. H. Dietz Nachfolger). His volume is hardly a chronicle of political happenings but it is a vivid portrayal of the harsh Bavarian penal system and of its effects upon the mind of a thoughtful man.

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE. Large Paper Edition. 12 Volumes. Limited to 575 numbered copies, of which 25 are not for sale. New York: Gabriel Wells. 1925.

This larger paper limited edition of the work of Oscar Wilde is particularly beautiful in format, and each volume bears some special introduction. These introductions are written by Richard Le Gallienne, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, W. B. Yeats, Coulson Kernahan, the late Edgar Saltus, Richard Butler Glaenzer, Dr. Clifford Smythe, A. B. Walkley, John Drinkwater, Arthur Symons, Robert Ross, John Cowper Powys, Michael Monahan, W. F. Morse, and Padraic Colum. They constitute an unusually thorough study of Wilde the poet, Wilde the fabulist, Wilde the dramatist, Wilde the essayist, and Wilde the critic and reviewer.

This is certainly one of the most distinguished editions of Wilde ever brought out and enshrines writing of great brilliance and of some genius. The fascinating and multiplex personality that so fell on tragedy still glitters through the years. Collectors of Wilde must have this edition, and no one who enjoys the wit and polish of his best work should forego it.

OXFORD OBSERVATIONS. By J. AINSWORTH MORGAN. Doran. 1925.

Touching Oxford, according to Mr. Morgan, there are none but pleasant observations to record. That is if you are one of those Americans who forbear to go about always with your countrymen, seeking excuses for displeasure with England and Englishmen. An American Rhodes Scholar at a recent annual dinner of which Rudyard Kipling was the guest of honour, made the following remarks which Mr. Morgan reports.

> Oxford and England and Europe have only made us love America the more. We become more American every day that we are here. We are sick of handshaking across the seas. Long ago we resigned our positions as unofficial ambassadors. We go home gladly and eagerly to a nation which we know and love and understand. We go home with some appreciation of duty and appreciation of human life. Some day, perhaps, some of us may amount to something if the life of idleness has not become too strong.

The author of this little speech belongs, of course, to the type of individual who from 1914 to 1917 believed Great Britain to be a useless evil, a bully, and a malignant plague in spats. "Remember the Rai- n River" was, as we recall, his rally cry.

But how sorely did that young orator need the services of the "Book of Etiquette" or even of a good sock in the eye. Mr. Kipling must have been delighted. "Right after all," he might have murmured in pleased reminiscence.

Mr. Morgan, an American, uses this as an illustration of the type of American that, he says, is too prevalent at Oxford. If he is right, handshakes will soon be the last things that are being exchanged across the North Atlantic, in spite of Mr. Arlen or the Thespians of André Charlot. "Oxford Observations," for the rest, pleasantly describes the clubs of that ancient University, hunting, punting, idling, and drinking. The style is amiable, colloquial, and immature, and the author is obviously not a Rhodes Scholar.

Fiction

THE MADONNA OF THE BARRICADES. By J. ST. LOE STRACHEY. Harcourt, Brace. 1925. $2.

Mr. St. Loe Strachey, who has recently been in New York for the English Speaking Union, has incredibly found time, in the midst of his edition of the *Spectator*, to take his first flier in fiction, an historical novel of the Carbonari and the 1848 Revolution in Paris. In the guise of a memoir of a certain young Englishman, Lord Chertsey, who at twenty fell in love with Carlotta, an Italian countess engaged in the battle of the Carbonari and Italian liberty, and threw in his lot for the Revolution and his love, he has told a tale of spirited adventure and young romance. The whole-hearted and simple zest of the novel is its most striking quality, yet Mr. Strachey's simplicity, in spite of being backed by good writing and a sophisticated point of view, remains a simplicity completely devoid of importance. Carlotta who might have been made a Conrad Dona Rita, is always a paper heroine, elaborately and paradoxically described as a "girlish girl" and "a modernized Machiavelli of the other sex." George Chertsey and especially his father, the English statesman of cosmopolitan and liberal charm, achieve some slight reality. The most engaging part of the book is its worldly contemporary background—Thackeray dissertating in The Cave of Harmony, Matthew Arnold as private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, Karl Marx and his subterranean London machinations, Louis Napoleon showing off his horse and his indiscreet but charming Mrs. Howard in Hyde Park. "The Madonna of the Barricades" should be read for an historical holiday written in English that has style and by an author with a sense for the sophisticated nuances of history.

THE ODYSSEY OF A NICE GIRL. By RUTH SUCKOW. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. $2.50.

Reviewed by EDWARD E. PARAMORE.

No one con doubt, after reading Miss Suckow's "Country People" and "The Odyssey of a Nice Girl," that she occupies a unique position in American fiction. Her astonishing gift of observation, her extraordinary power of humanizing the banalities and the spiritual dreariness of rural and urban life in the agrarian Middle West; in short, the photographic accuracy which she is able to employ in the creation of her amazingly real mediocrities, is without peer. And yet her flawless fidelity of detail produces in the reader nothing but a kind of sterile wonder. You marvel at her specific literary virtuosity, but cannot become interested in the commonplace characters she understands so well.

In fact the outstanding characteristic of Miss Suckow's new novel is its relentless and implacable dulness. In her detached passion for naturalism she has rigorously excluded humor, irony, bitterness, satire, romantic love, and sorrow (except in the attenuated form in which they exist among people of limited emotional capacity); and in doing so she has sacrificed both charm and pathos. Doubtless it may be protested that Marjorie Schoessel and her family are pathetic figures and that in the very dulness and futility of their lives lies the tragedy; but such tragedy is in the eyes of the beholder not the participant. If there is no zest or romance or achievement in the towns of Iowa, there is at least a bovine contentment born of a happy ignorance of the high adventure that lurks in the uninhibited life toward which Marjorie vaguely aspires. All except Marjorie are happy, as that nebulous state goes in this disillusioned and frustrated age, and even she suffers only timorously from a chronic spiritual *malaise* which she is unable to define or obliterate.

By this I do not mean to convey the idea that Miss Suckow has not accomplished what she set out to do: she has been all too faithful to her ideal. That "The Odyssey of a Nice Girl" is dull and leaves me cold is due to her uncompromising attitude. If you ask for the beauty and pathos of Willa Cather, she replies that there is beauty in the wooded sunlit slopes, the rich, verdant pastures, and the golden cornfields; that there is pathos in the hearts of these ineffectual, simple people, but they are unaware of it all—except Marjorie, who perceives it dimly, intermittently, with the disturbed wonder of an inarticulate dreamer. If you ask for the churning welter of elemental emotions that Sherwood Anderson finds in these benighted villages, she answers with her novels that life is not like that and she will not let her imagination tamper with reality. In the same way she scorns to employ the skilful distortion of character that makes Sinclair Lewis entertaining.

PASSION AND GLORY. By WILLIAM CUMMINGS. Knopf. 1925. $2.

The eloquent beauty of Mr. Cumming's prose invests the somewhat thin material of his second novel with a depth and power which a less able writing gift could never have awakened into life. Structurally the tale is feeble, and on occasion the essence of his character values is psychologically unsound, but it is in the author's searching study of Lens, the melancholy, ill-balanced, thwarted protagonist that no faintest flaw appears. The scene is a Cape Cod fishing village, with "that ol' davil sea" in the background, taking its toll of local men and ships. Captain Whitney, a sailing master who had married Myra, the love of Lens' youth is drowned on the same night that his wife deserts her home and small children.

Lens becomes the guardian of the latter, but within a year Myra returns, her excuse for disappearance being the unhappy relations of her married life. During her absence Lens has undergone a strange transformation of spirit, conversion to God having seized him with intense exaltion. There has come to him as well an acute longing for belated paternity, and under the urge of these combined forces he prevails upon the now passionless Myra to be his wife. Fate balks him in his desire for fatherhood, as it does in all on which he centers his hope of felicity. In the end, after Myra's death, although his youth is now long past, a tardy reward is vouchsafed him. The conclusion may not be in all respects a happy one. From the viewpoint of technique, it is wanting in preparatory suggestiveness, too abrupt and far-fetched. Its final dramatic effect is strong and moving.

(*Continued on next page*)

Sophia Cleugh's Two Novels

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The New Books

Fiction

(*Continued from preceding page*)

THE HOLLY HEDGE. By TEMPLE BAILEY. Penn. 1925. $2.

This gaily clad little volume contains between its covers five Christmas stories two of them adapted to the understanding of young folk and the remaining three intended for their elders. All are steeped in holiday sentiment, and all are interesting even though there is too obvious an insistence on "the peace on earth, good will to men" theme. Miss Bailey can convey the spirit of good cheer and the succulence of Christmas. That she casts the tales in an old mould, re-dressing, them is less to be depreciated in such stories than of another type.

Poetry

YULE FIRE: An Anthology of Christmas Poems. By MARGUERITE WILKINSON. Macmillan. 1925. $2.50.

Here, for once, is an anthology which requires neither self-justification nor apology from the compiler. Mrs. Wilkinson's purpose, to bring together in a single volume all the best poems about Christmas, is excellent and certainly fulfils a need. The same cannot be said of nine out of ten of recent anthologies. Mrs. Wilkinson has done her work almost as well as it could have been done, setting a standard high enough to exclude any specimen of those thousand-and-one poems which tend to stray into literature though their proper place is on the Christmas Greeting Cards. Possibly her choice of carols might have been fortunately extended to include a few of the cruder pieces that belong to folklore rather than to literature itself. Many, such as "The Bitter Withy," though not actually poems of the Nativity are nevertheless poems of Christmas. Otherwise the most notable omission is John Masefield's "Christmas at Sea" which should certainly have found a place in the book. In a second edition (which Mrs. Wilkinson deserves) she should also include Frank Kendon's "Christmas Eve," perhaps the most beautiful of recent poems on the old theme. But she could not have known of this at the time the book was compiled. Her prefatory essay could be improved by some discriminating cuts and elisions. At present it has a labored air and sometimes falls into false simplicity. Mrs. Wilkinson has caught something of the manner of Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne. Her prose tones are not her own and the result is often irritating. But she has much to say that is true and interesting and her book, as a whole, deserves high praise.

LADDERS THROUGH THE BLUE. By HERMANN HAGEDORN. Doubleday, Page. 1925. $1.50.

While on the whole this collection of lyrics does not rise to the level of the best that Mr. Hagedorn has previously done, yet its quality is sufficiently high to reaffirm his place among that small coterie of contemporary Americans whose poetry really counts. It may safely be said that pieces such as "The Ghost" and "The Eyes of God" would do credit to any poet now living; and there are a sufficient number of such poems to lend the volume a distinction far above the average. At all times Mr. Hagedorn is a careful workman, and at his best he is a lyricist of a pure and ethereal quality; and while the reader may feel that in many of the selections he falls far below his highest attainment, yet one will also be persuaded that he has written little if anything that is without poetic quality, and little if anything that has not some claim upon one's attention.

THE TOP O' THE COLUMN. By KEITH PRESTON. Pascal Covici. 1925. $2.

The verse of newspaper columnists, written for the passing hour, does not often survive the passing hour in interest. The work of Keith Preston is no exception to the rule; yet if one turns to his volume not expecting too much but desirous of a little amusement, one is not apt to be disappointed. There is cleverness in many of these verses, although many others are tawdry and cheap; there is occasionally an outburst of real and telling irony, occasionally a passage of genuine caustic point, occasionally the flash of an idea worthy of appearance in better company. And undeniably there is humor—now and then quite effective humor, wasted, alas! on themes whose interest cannot survive next year or the year after next. Mr. Preston is to be seen at his best in his epigrams, of which a typical example is "The Destiny That Shapes Our Ends:"

Imperial Caesar dead and turned to clay
Estopped a hole to keep the wind away;
The great god Ra whose shrine once covered acres
Is filler now for cross-word puzzle makers.

WINDS AND TIDES. By JULIET CALHOUN ISHAM. Putnam's. 1925. $1.50.

Platitudes in undistinguished verse of a faintly Tennysonian flavor; as, for example,

He looked into the wasting west
Across a purple field of sea;
"Of all my loves, I've loved the best
The one that—loved not me—Ah me!"

Religion

"S. AUGUSTINI DE CIVITATE DEI LIBRI XXII." Edited by J. E. C. WELLDON. Macmillan, 2 vols. 1925. $15.

The publishers of this work render all lovers of scholarship in America their debtors by the importation of this splendid edition of the *magnum opus* of the greatest of the Latin Fathers. Dean Welldon tells us that the preparation of this book cost him not a little time and pains, but they have certainly borne fruit.

These two volumes contain an accurate and carefully collated text in the original Latin together with a running commentary in the form of footnotes in English. The Dean has had notable success in "steering a course between excess and defect in a commentary on such a book as the 'De Civitate Dei.'" The notes, while full of erudition and giving many collateral references, are of moderate compass and entirely free from academic pedantry.

Of the value of such a work to the student of theology or ecclesiastical history it is not necessary to say anything here. However, it is possible that the importance of the "De Civitate Dei" to the student of Latin literature is not so generally recognized. St. Augustine is one of the most influential and powerful links between the old classical world and the new world that was to come after his time; he had become a Christian while the classical tradition was still strong and, as Mackall remarks in his "Latin Literature," it was in the hands of men like Jerome and Augustine that this tradition "was caught up from the wreck of the Empire and handed down, not unimpaired, yet still in prodigious force and vitality to the modern world." In a valuable appendix to volume II Dean Welldon deals with St. Augustine's literary style and illustrates its idiosyncrasies by a collection of phrases and sentences from the body of the work.

A special word of praise is due to the Introduction, explaining the structure and spirit of St. Augustine's book, and also to the appendices treating chiefly of certain theological aspects of the subject matter.

(*Continued on page* 438)

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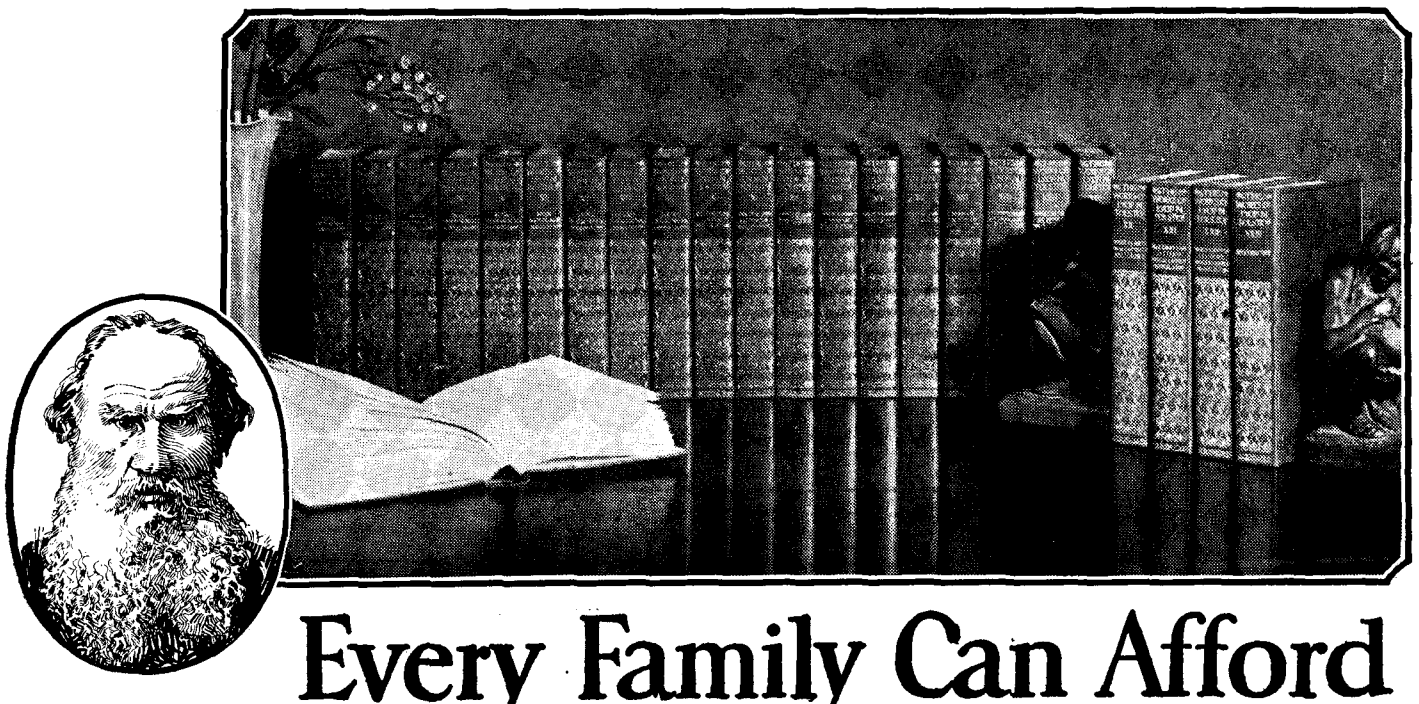

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Books and the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to Mrs. Becker c/o *The Saturday Review*.

RECOMMENDATION

BROOMSTICKS AND OTHER TALES. By Walter de la Mare (Knopf).

AMERICANA. By Milton Waldman (Holt).

ISRAEL. By Ludwig Lewisohn (Boni & Liveright).

P.H.B., New York, asks for a book of travel for reading aloud; it may take the reader anywhere so long as it does so pleasantly.

STELLA BENSON'S "The Little World" (Macmillan) takes him into all sorts of faraway places, China and Indo-China, Japan, and the less-frequented sections of the United States. These unconventional sketches kept the readers of a London daily in touch with the ends of the earth and will do the same for a book-audience. "New York in Seven Days," by H. S. Dayton and L. B. Barratt (McBride), is intended for field use, and the daring way in which it gives actual addresses of shops and eating places—just the addresses in which visitors are most interested—makes it uncommonly useful in action, but it could be read aloud pleasantly too. There are two new ones from China; in one Harry Franck moves down on the map and gives us "Roving Through Southern China" (Century); the other is a light-running record of travel, "Temple Bells and Silver Sails," by Elizabeth Crump Enders (Appleton), which will be welcomed by those who read her "Swinging Lanterns." "Gone Abroad," by Douglas Goldring (Houghton Mifflin), not only gives us an idea of places as comparatively unvisited by tourists as the Balearic Isles, but will no doubt be taken into the company of classics of travel for its graceful literary style. A travel book that bears on contemporary history is J. H. Nicholson's "The Remaking of the Nations" (Dutton), the story of a tour in 1922 to study the interplay of Eastern and Western civilizations.

T.P.A., New York, returned from a trip to Spain, asks for a history of Spain in English and for advice on the study of her literature.

THE ideal beginning history for an American is Henry Dwight Sedgwick's "A Short History of Spain" (Little, Brown). It has so fascinating a style that even a reader with much else to do will plunge through it scarce stopping, and its methods of introducing writers, not in a section at the end, but as the historical narrative proceeds, is especially appropriate in the case of a country where writers have had so much to do with history. This book left me with so much unexpended interest that I reread S. de Madariaga's "The Genius of Spain" (Oxford), a series of luminous criticisms of contemporary writers, and once more went over a book that gave me, I believe, more insight into the national psychology than anything else I have read on the subject, Miguel de Unamuno's "The Tragic Sense of Life" (Macmillan). I even read the new monograph on "Luis de Leon" (Oxford), by A. F. G. Bell, because he figures largely in history as in literature. There is a new collection of source material, most of which is here available for the first time in translation, in the survey of Old Spanish literature, E. A. Peers's "Spanish Mysticism" (Dutton). George T. Northrup has added to the list of helps for the American student of Spanish writers an "Introduction to Spanish Literature" (University of Chicago), which brings in history as Sedgwick's book brings in literature, to make a connected story of national life. For a survey of that literature at the present time, the latest is "Contemporary Spanish Literature," by Aubrey Bell (Knopf), author of the book on Luis de Leon just named. This goes from 1868 to the present day and almost hour, and while scholarly and authorative, is not too heavy for study-groups in search of such surveys.

E. D. P., New York, asks for new books about London, published since the Reader's Guide Book list.

THERE has been an outburst of London books this year. William Bolitho's "Leviathan" (Harper) gets the color and quality of a great city into brief studies of small parts of it. The top-liner, however, is "The London Perambulator" (Knopf), and no wonder, seeing that the text is by James Bone, correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, and the magnificent illustrations are by Muirhead Bone. The pictures for Sidney Dark's "London," which now appears in a new and less expensive edition (Macmillan), are by Joseph Pennell, and they are more beautiful every time you look at them, but I would like the book better if Mr. Dark could ever forget his King Charles's head, but he does not, whether speaking of Westminster or Thomas Cromwell. "The Heart of London" (Brentano) is by H. V. Morton, a newspaper man and is little sketches of life. "Introducing London," by E. V. Lucas (Doran), is a small book for the traveller, especially such as love to get off the main arteries of travel, where Mr. Lucas is the sprightliest of guides. In "Cities of Many Men" (Houghton Mifflin) H. C. Chatfield Taylor tells of a long acquaintance not only with London, but with Paris, New York, and Chicago. Karl Capek's "Letters from England" (Doubleday, Page) treats London particularly and is one of the most demurely delightful travel books in years. The pictures by the author are just as funny as the text. This is one of the few books about England by a foreigner that England has taken to her heart; or at least she has bought it freely. "The Colour of London: Historic, Personal, and Local," by W. J. Loftie (Dodd, Mead), is one of a series about great cities, quartos beautifully illustrated in color. Another publication of this house is "A Paradise in Picadilly," by Harry Furniss, the famous caricaturist, with his own illustrations. It is a personal history of this famous street, or rather of one of its byways.

Of recent novels with a London scene the two that seem to me most successful in atmosphere are Naomi Royde-Smith's "The Tortoiseshell Cat" (Boni & Liveright) and Louis Hémon's "M. Ripois and Nemesis" (Macmillan), as unlike as two novels are like to be. The first is in the world of people who range from Chelsea to Kensington, get their cakes at Buzzard's, their furniture at Heal's, and their hot water from an instrument they incredibly pronounce "geezer." The second takes place mainly in mean streets, more especially those of the foreign sections where hot water is not noticeable; the plot is relentless and grim, and the book another proof that Hémon's genius was not compassed by one gentle and pious romance. But both books are true London.

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The New Books

(*Continued from page* 436)

Travel

WANDERINGS. By CLAYTON HAMILTON. Twenty drawings by Ernest C. Peixotto. Doubleday, Page. 1925.

May the day never dawn when the breed of Laurence Sterne has run out. For our part, we would peruse no unsentimental journeyings. Give us a book like this of the Signori Hamilton e Peixotto —*with soft, gracious drawings of many* a lovely nook in this or that western land of Europe, and a text to match them, redolent of glasses red and amber, dazzling barmaids and shop assistants, a sluttish she of Siena caught in the very moment of vending matches and spouting from the illustrious Florentine, and a nine year old fairy to charm us from Lausanne's cathedral.

Half of these sketches hail from 1903—O guileless and delighted era—when still the toothbrush was both hygienic necessity and the writing traveler's boast and certificate of gentility, and Robert Louis Stevenson and the late Col. Roosevelt owned equal share in the adoration of a young man of feeling. Since that placid consulate much water has flowed under and over the bridge, and Mr. Hamilton has found austerer occupations in hating the Germans and baiting the Shavians. It is pleasant to turn these innocent pages—we could do *with more of them. For their author is* born preacher of the sweet religion of traveling, and can always be depended on to write beautifully of the imperfect happenings which befall even the luckiest of wanderers.

CITIES OF MANY MEN. By H. C. CHATFIELD-TAYLOR. Houghton Mifflin. 1925. $5.

These reminiscences of a somewhat pompous pilgrim to the "cities of many men," reveal by turn the London, Paris, New York, and Chicago of fifty years ago, as they are seen through the tired eyes of a lifelong wanderer. Mr. Chatfield-Taylor is in the truest sense an American cosmopolitan, at home everywhere, surprised at nothing, in whom overcivilization has replaced the spirit of adventure. Persistently and a little forlornly he deprecates rouge, steam drills, haste, and other characteristics of our age. However, his late Victorian London, and France from the fall of the Empire, are recalled with familiarity, and his seemly reflections are interspersed with memorable encounters, since he numbered among his acquaintance such men as Andrew Lang, Henry Irving, and Edmund Gosse, Rodin, and Coquelin *ainé*, as well as Kitchener and Lloyd George.

Contemporary New York he disparages, at the expense of that other almost forgotten city, the New York of horse cars and brownstone mansions, which suited him better. In fact, so far, the book might appropriately be rechristened, "Myself in Several Cities." But a flickering of personal enthusiasm is reserved for the latter pages of the last essay, that concerns itself with the youth and growth of Chicago, its needs, and its promises. Here is work, for the cultivated cosmopolitan. In the circle of Chicago's forward-looking leaders, his detachment, and even at moments his hopelessness are forgotten, and his narrative gains a significance that its earlier chapters notably lack.

GAME TRAILS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. By A. BRYAN WILLIAMS. Scribner's. 1925. $5.

"Game Trails in British Columbia" is much more than a guide book for hunters, although it would admirably fill that office. A. Bryan Williams, the author, was for thirteen years Head of the Provincial Game Department of British Columbia and during that time he made a thorough study of the land and animals under his observation. The work is full of valuable information for all who are interested in the life out of doors but will find an even larger public through its sheer readability. Mr. Williams has the natural story-teller's style which seems to be an outgrowth of many nights spent around the friendly camp-fire. The book is very attractively illustrated with photographs of the Canadian wilds, and presents itself as a solution of the problem of the masculine Christmas gift.

SIX YEARS IN THE MALAY JUNGLE. By CRAVETH WELLS. Doubleday, Page. 1925.

Six years in the jungle is a long time, but six years through the looking-glass in such a jungle as Alice would have found, had she found a jungle at all, should have proved a devastating experience. From 1913 to 1919 Craveth Wells, however, lived in the Malay jungle, which is most certainly through the looking-glass from us, and managed that most incredible feat of mental gymnastics, maintaining the Alice point of view.

Of course, he was living in a land that "is still the home of tigers, black panthers, elephants, rhinoceroses, tapirs, snakes thirty feet long, insects over a foot long, butterflies, and moths just about a foot wide, five different kinds of flying animals and forty different kinds of monkeys, and about twenty thousand wild women. (They are quite interesting.)" It is a land where the natives dig beeswax from mines at the base of some of the large jungle trees; where "parents never punish their children and the children always seem happy and contented"; where certain fish come out of the water and climb trees. Mr. Wells writes, "the fish I saw seemed to feel the heat, because after it had enjoyed the ozone, it climbed down, walked leisurely over to a pool, stood on the edge, dipped up some water in its fin and threw it over its head."

Although Mr. Wells's style is fragmentary it is its freshness and sparkle, its pathos and humor, the scraps of description of softly gliding rivers, of elastic jungles, of native manners and native methods; the simple telling of accomplishment against the odds of the jealous jungle and the inertia of the native (he was surveying a railroad); it is this and the Alice point of view that gives us a most delightful three or four hours in the Malay Peninsula.

THE VAST SUDAN. By A. RADCLYFFE DUGMORE. Stokes. 1925. $4.

A. Radclyffe Dugmore is probably best known to the public for his superb wild animal photographs made, by day and by night, in the jungles and uplands of Africa. He was one of the first hunters with a camera and one of the few whose technical ability, combined with ingenuity and cool nerve distinguishes him from the "taker of snap shots" and makes him the "maker of pictures." The F. R. P. S. after his name would, in itself, attest that.

In London, in June 1924, we had the pleasure of seeing Major Dugmore's film and of hearing him tell of his experiences in the making of it in the vast Sudan. This book is the narrative of those experiences.

Except for the filming of a charging elephant and being engulfed in a charge of mounted Arabian warriors there was little about them of a hair-raising nature. There were pictures of birds and antelope; of little-known tribes of the White Nile; of the "hyena" dance and "lion" dance, unique among the primitive peoples of Africa. There were "shots" of Khartoum and of Omdurman, the largest native city on the continent; of Kodok, Rejaf, and Kassala, "a more picturesque town it has never been my good fortune to see." There were pictures of the construction of the great Makwa Dam on the Blue Nile, that great engineering feat that is to turn a desert into one of the most fertile cotton producing areas in the world; pictures of laying a railroad across the desert at the rate of a mile and a quarter a day; a railroad that will supplant the picturesque but slow-swinging camel with its cumbersome bales of cotton. Major Dugmore tells the story entertainingly and graphically and the profusion of excellent photographs makes one feel that a cinema film is being run off before him as he turns the pages.

And what the book contains that the lecture did not is a chapter devoted to the history of the Sudan and one on its present political significance. This latter chapter will probably bear little weight with the armchair sentimentalist who knows nothing of actual conditions in far-away places, but believes, in his unthinking spare moments, in the propagandist's smoothly shaded doctrine of "Africa for the Africans." To the student who would know the opinion of a man who has spent a good portion of his life in travel and observation, a man whose life work has proved him sympathetic to the *less fortunate* this chapter will give numerous things to ponder.

But enough—read "The Vast Sudan," it is splendid entertainment.

ON THE ROOF OF THE ROCKIES. By LEWIS R. FREEMAN. Dodd, Mead. 1925. $5.

"On the Roof of the Rockies" is an eventful tale of an expedition across the Columbia Ice-Field made by Lewis Freeman the author, Byron Harmon the noted nature photographer, three guides, and sixteen pack-horses. Mr. Freeman is very successful in giving the atmosphere of this little explored part of Canada and also in presenting the hardships and amusing adventures of the party bent on capturing the first moving pictures of Mount Columbia. The illustrations form a lovely processional through the volume and compare favorably with the best of Alpine mountain photography.

RAHWEDIA. By C. HAROLD SMITH. Appleton. 1925. $2.50.

Here are adventures among the Maoris by one who went to the old New Zealand in his youth. Mr. Smith's is an easy-going narrative embodying much interesting information about the natives, and an actual romance involving a Maori girl, Rahwedia. The account of the romance has beauty, and the whole book is unusually vivid reminiscence. The customs and superstitions of the Maoris are graphically described.

Trade Winds

AMONG several interesting Decabibs that have come to hand is this from John Charlesgift, Lusby's, Md. He says:—

If I was a bookseller, I would hand over the widely-talked-of volumes no matter how good, as a matter of course: but it would afford me a sting of pleasure every time I was asked for a book that I knew to be of a rare quality and which seemed to have been forgotten, or never to have received its due.

As for instance:

My Childhood: / University Days / In the World: } *Gorki* { This is really one book though in three volumes

The Letters of Fyodor Dostoevsky
The Letters of George Meredith
The Story of Henri Brulard ....*Stendhal*
Letters to an Unknown .....*Mérimée*
The Thread of Ariadne ....*Adrian Stokes*
The Orissers .....*L. H. Myers*
The Longest Journey .....*E. M. Forster*
Hesperides .....*Ridgeley Torrence*
In Old Calabria .....*Norman Douglas*

♣ ♣

Young Amherst is here: he came back second-cabin in one of the big boats and reports that the most truly refined and gentlemanly passenger he met was a Scotch prizefighter, over here to contend the world's welter-weight championship. Y. A. says he has met very few authors, except Jim Tully, who are as thorough gentlemen as this amiable Scottish bruiser. He says that people in London were under the impression that Red Grange had been elected President.

He was rather startled to find Jocunda hard at work in the shop. I have promised to keep them both until the first of the year, but then, unless business improves, one will have to flit.

Jocunda, I admit it in surprise, is making a place for herself. She has already arranged a Bulletin Board at the front door on which she pastes newspaper cuttings and random *affiches* that amuse her, and they are very effective in arousing the sluggish customer. It was she who called my attention to the fact that Mr. William McFee is to address the Modern Language Association in Chicago on "Some Discernible Tendencies Toward Ephesianism in the American Temperament." I asked her, anxiously, what Ephesianism might be; but she had already written to Mr. McFee to find out, and showed me with pride a postal-card in that author's own hand inscribed "Acts XIX, 24-34." Presently I heard her chuckling over the passage, and then she discovered and insisted on reading to me the story of Eutychus in the following chapter. That reminded me that Dean Swift had written a sermon about Eutychus, and I dug out an old volume of Swift for her. She looked over the sermon and said it was dull, but she came upon Swift's "Argument Against Abolishing Christianity" which tickled her so she sold the volume to the next customer who came in. After reading some of Swift's "Journal to Stella" she announced that he was "a perfectly heavenly old maniac and I'm *for* him."

It is amusing to me to watch young Amherst and Jocunda Vassar together. Master Amherst is shrewd enough to spot right away that she is much quicker witted than he, and he is getting careful about announcing any of his simple-minded but very amiable opinions until he has caught her drift. He was brought up in the so-called Columnist Tradition, learned most of his literature in the newspapers, and innocently attempted to prove that some writers (unknown to me) called Milt Gross and Bugs Baer and Frank Sullivan were the cream of the word; and that Samuel Pepys was the greatest humorist of all. She swept away his whole wagonload of enthusiasms by declaring them "unimportant." She insisted that Pepys was a mere babbler compared to Boswell in his Letters; which, it seems, she read at Vassar, and made me order the two volumes from the Oxford Press. Professor Tinker who edited the Boswell Letters, is her vote for the man she would most like to meet; she has written to him twice fixing a rendezvous anywhere along the New Haven line, but he hasn't succumbed. She says he is a prince of scholars and a real eighteenth century droll; this she divines, it appears, from his footnotes. However she has warned me against reading the Boswell Letters myself, as being too lively for my taste; which, apparently, she regards as timid. She now has got young Amherst plodding desperately through André Gide, to catch up with her. While they are arguing as to whether someone called Herbert Swope, who is, I gather, a reporter on some newspaper, is Antichrist or not, I have to wait on the customers.

♣ ♣

Two books that I have had calls for lately, and had to report myself unfamiliar with, were highly spoken of by the requesting customers. They were: "How the French Boy Learns to Write" (Harvard University Press) and "Haunted Houses" by Flammarion (Appleton.).

P. E. G. QUERCUS

News

Pick your Christmas books by this standard:

* * *

Where will they be *ten years from today?*

* * *

Will they be on the library-table, beside the fire-place, books to go back to time and again, with increasing delight?

* * *

Or will they be mere items in the dim jumble of discarded things?

* * *

Ten years ago books were published that met this test—

Jean-Christophe
Casuals of the Sea
The Man Against the Sky

to name but three.

* * *

Here are five *new* books, books that are alive to-day and are, we believe, destined to be alive *ten years from to-day*:

VERDI, A NOVEL OF THE OPERA
By Franz Werfel—$3.00

FRAULEIN ELSE
A Novel by Arthur Schnitzler—$1.50

THE MAN MENCKEN
A Biography by Isaac Goldberg—$4.00

POEMS
By Irwin Edman—$2.00

YOU WHO HAVE DREAMS (verse)
By Maxwell Anderson—$2.00

* * *

Verdi
A NOVEL OF THE OPERA
By Franz Werfel ($3.00)

Fraulein Else
A NOVEL IN THE FORM OF A DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE
By Arthur Schnitzler ($1.50)

The Man Mencken
A BOSWELLIAN BIOGRAPHY
By Isaac Goldberg ($4.00)

You Who Have Dreams (Poetry)
By Maxwell Anderson ($2.00)

Poems
By Irwin Edman ($2.00)

* * *

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AT AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

SUMPTUOUSLY bound sets of American, English and French authors, finely extra-illustrated works, rare first editions, sporting books and prints, costume plates in color, autograph letters and manuscripts, including the library of Edward Appleyard of Jamestown, N. Y., ornithological books from the collection of Lithgow Osborne of Auburn, N. Y., were sold at the American Art Galleries December 2 and 3, 648 lots bringing the handsome total of $73,793. All three sessions were well attended and there was lively interest and spirited bidding from start to finish. Prices on the whole were high.

The star lot proved to be a fine and perfect copy of the first issue of the Second Folio of Shakespeare which brought $3,150. Next came Homer's "Opera," 2 vols. in 1, folio, levant morocco by Duru, Florence, 1488, the exceedingly rare editio princeps, which sold for $1,800. A series of five autograph letters of Lord Byron, four of which are signed, on his early life and literary work, bound in a quarto volume, levant morocco by Sangorski & Sutcliffe, 1808-1811, fetched $1,150. Many other lots brought high prices.

A few representative lots and the prices realized were the following:

Alken Colored Plates. Apperley's "Life of a Sportsman," with colored plates by Henry Alken, royal 8vo, morocco by Reviere, London, 1842. First issue of the first edition. $425.

Burroughs (John). "Writings," 18 vols., 8vo, morocco, Boston, 1904-15. Limited Autograph edition. $230.

Clemens (Samuel L.). "Writings," 25 vols., 8vo, levant, Hartford, 1899-1907. Edition de luxe. $640.

Cruikshank (George). "The Humorist," with colored plates by George Cruikshank, 12mo, levant, uncut, London, 1822-19-19-20. First edition of volumes 2, 3 and 4. $480.

Daudet (Alphonse). "Works," 24 vols., 8vo, levant, Boston, 1898. Champrosay edition limited to 100 sets. $725.

Dickens (Charles). "A Tale of Two Cities," 8vo, original parts, 8 in 7, in cloth [illegible] First issue of the [illegible] vols., royal 8vo, [illegible] London, 1881-82. Original [illegible] 500 edition extended from [illegible] volumes by extra illustration.

[illegible] (Benjamin). "Works," 20 vols., [illegible] levant morocco, London and New York, [illegible] Edition Diplomatique. $675.

Egan (Pierce). "Life in London," royal 8vo, morocco by Reviere, London, 1821. First issue of the first edition. $350.

Flaubert (Gustave). "Complete Works," 10 vols., 8vo, levant, New York, 1904. Academie Française edition. $350.

Franklin (Benjamin). A. L. S., 1 p., 4to, Portsmouth, August 16, 1762. $510.

Goldsmith (Oliver). "The Vicar of Wakefield," 2 vols., 12mo, levant morocco by Reviere, Salisbury, 1766. First edition. $975.

Hawthorne (Nathaniel). "Complete Writings," 22 vols., 8vo, levant, Boston, 1900. Autograph edition. $475.

Irving (Washington). "Works," 40 vols., 8vo, boards, vellum backs, New York, n. d. Limited Joseph Jefferson edition. $305.

James (Henry). "Novels and Tales," 26 vols., 8vo, levant, New York, 1907-09. Scribner's limited edition. $350.

Kipling (Rudyard). "Works," 27 vols., 8vo, morocco by Zaehnsdorf, London, 1897-1910. Macmillan's edition de luxe. $310.

Lamb (Charles). "Elia," and "Last Essays of Elia," 2 vols., 12 mo, London, 1823-33. First issue of the first edition. $505.

Roosevelt (Theodore). "Complete Writings," 22 vols., 8vo, morocco, Philadelphia, 1903. Limited Collector's editon. $310.

Scott (Sir Walter). "Waverley Novels," 51 vols., royal 8vo, levant morocco, New York, n. d. Set of the extra-illustrated edition. $1,005.

Shelley (Percy B.). "Laon and Cynthia," 8vo, levant morocco by Sangorski and Sutcliffe, London, 1818. First issue of the first edition. $305.

Shelley. "Works," 8 vols., 8vo, three-quarters morocco by Reviere, London, 1880. Buxton Forman edition. $320.

Sterne (Laurence). "Works," 21 vols., 16mo, mottled calf, London, 1760-75. Collected set of first editions. $520.

AT THE ANDERSON GALLERIES

IMPORTANT letters of Benjamin Franklin and other letters and documents from the library of the late William F. Laffan, of this city, with additions, were sold at the Anderson Galleries November 30, 359 lots bringing $19,662.50. The outstanding feature of the sale was a notable series of Franklin letters which attracted a good deal of attention and caused some lively bidding.

Franklin (Benjamin). A. L. S., 2 pp., 4to, n. p., December 5, 1748. A fine characteristic letter to a debtor urging upon him the necessity of paying his debts. $500.

Franklin. A. L. S., 1 p., folio, Philadelphia, December 4, 1753. Letter ordering the first press for New Haven. $675.

Franklin. Six pages from his letter book, containing 11 A. L. S., 6 signed in full, 5 with initials, all dated from London, August 22, 1772. Franklin's own copies of these letters. $2,900.

McKinley (William). A.L.S., 1 p., 8vo, Executive Mansion, October 7, 1898. $180.

Beethoven (Ludwig van). The complete original autograph manuscript of the "Rondo a Capricco," better known under the title of "Fury over a Lost Farthing, Vented in a Caprice." 8 pp., oblong 8vo, 1822. A superb manuscript. $1,275.

Chopin (Frederic). "Complete manuscript of Nocturne in B major, about 1845. 4 pp., oblong 8vo, 1845. $620.

Liszt (Franz). Complete original manuscript of "Grande Fantaisie de Juan," 37 pp., 4 to, about February 15, 1843, $370.

Roosevelt (Theodore). A.L.S., 2 pp., 8vo, November 28, about 1897. $90.

NOTE AND COMMENT

THE Authors Club has selected Jo Davidson as the sculptor of the Walt Whitman memorial which it plans to erect in this city. The selection was made on the basis of Mr. Davidson's preliminary model, which represents the poet in great overcoat and hat in hand striding in the open.

♣ ♣

Yale University Library has obtained by purchase the books of the late Professor Albert T. Clay, Assyriologist, and will add the collection to the university library. The collection embraces about 1400 selected technical books, copies of Babylonian tablets, and journals and periodicals needed by students in Assyriology and Babylonian literature.

A Kipling collection formed by E. P. Dutton & Co., of this city, will be sold by their order at the Anderson Galleries, December 15. This collection comprises a large number of rarities, including association items of intimate intrinsic interest and value to the Kipling collector. The early rarities such as "Echoes," Lahore, 1884; "Schoolboy Lyrics," Lahore, 1881; the "Quartette," Lahore, 1885, are to be found here in fine condition.

♣ ♣

The only diary found among the papers of Joseph Conrad since his death is an exact record written in a penny notebook of a journey up the Congo made in 1890, published in the current issue of *The Yale Review*. The journey was made by Conrad and his companions overland from the mouth of the Congo River as far as Stanley Pool and from there on by steamer. It is said that when Conrad was nine years old he put his finger on the map of Africa and said, "When I grow up I will go there." The diary is the first impression of his fulfilled resolve. His keen powers of observation and the hardships which he encountered are revealed in it.

The Salad Bowl

Let no king, out of the few left upon earth, imagine that when he puts up at the Walt Whitman Hotel, in Camden, N. J., he is going to dazzle Jack Taylor. Jack cannot be dazzled. Jack has adopted Camden, has looked us over, and determined that we can be made one of the great cities of earth, and that, at no distant day, any person, anywhere in the world, may point his, or her, finger, to Camden, N. J., on the map, and say "There is the place where Walt Whitman lived."

—W. H. Ketler, City Librarian, Camden, N. J.

♣ ♣

There was something doing every minute in old Pompeii. Then Vesuvius covered things up for several centuries. But Vesuvian ashes and the warm climate acted as a preservative. One day they dug up Pompeii. Even the archeologists blushed; but history is history, so they moved snappy Pompeii to the Naples museum. And thither the thoughtful students of the world have been going every year since the removal. One never dreamed there were so many students on earth.

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The Phoenix Nest

EVERY Christmas season we spend as many seventy-five centses as we can afford upon copies of the gorgeous Christmas numbers of the English periodicals. * * * We don't consider English magazines as much, except around Christmas. * * * But then the profuse and luscious color work of *Pears's Annual* and *The Sketch*, of *The Tatler*, the *London Illustrated*, *The Queen*, and so on, ravish our senses! * * * This year we purchased *The Sketch* and *Pear's* and the Christmas *Punch*. * * * The spirit of Merrie England, though the material treated is modern, persists in these pages. * * * Of late years the delicate and delightful drawing of Mr. *Ernest H. Shepard* has shyly insinuated itself even into American magazines, what with Christopher Robin Hood holding up all the burgesses at the point of *Mr. Milne's* sparkling verse. * * * Mr. Shepard should certainly share fifty-fifty in the acclaim of "When We Were Very Young"! He is a finished artist. He can draw slimmer and prettier young ladies than appear anywhere save in *La Vie Parisienne*. * * * In the Christmas *Sketch* he has a delightfully-tinted series of pictures called "The Fan That Caused the Mischief." It is worth the whole number. He possesses a fancy that would have pleased *Watteau*. He might himself have painted fans with *Carlo Van Loo*. * * * In *Pear's*, *Hugh Walpole* tells a ghost story, illustrated by *Maurice Greiffenhagen* in a sinister style we early loved. *Arthur Machen* writes of "Christmas Science." *Punch* has, of course, *Shepard* and *George Morrow* and *Lewis Baumer* and other names as familiar,—and plenty of color plates. * * * If you are a bachelor, which we are not, the best way to spend Christmas eve is to lay out about ten dollars buying up *all* the London Christmas periodicals, and peruse them at your ease in front of lambent flames, — with something enheartening at your elbow. * * * Speaking of *La Vie Parisienne*, who *does* do the innocently-outrageous and madly fascinating young females that caper all over several of its pages in every issue? We do not know his name. But certainly he adds greatly to the gaiety of life. * * * Now that we've made this start, after returning from the new uptown Brentano's, we might as well go on and devote this particular *Phoenix Nest* to magazines. * * * A new one, which claims to be the first in book-form to be published in the United States, is *The American Parade*, edited by *W. Adolphe Roberts*. It numbers among its collaborators *Richard Le Gallienne*, *Ethel Watts Mumford*, *George Sterling*, *Olga Petrova*, *Orrick Johns*, *Jacques Le Clercq*, and others. * * * Mr. Le Gallienne relieves himself of a rather belated and stupid parody of "The Wasteland" therein. Sterling contributes a good poem. *Gamaliel Bradford* contributes a story. Orrick Johns interprets the underrhythm of America in "The Big Tune." * * * Those are only a few of the contributions. * * * The magazines has a certain *verve*. But holy smoke, what a jacket! A cheap amateurish drawing that should immediately be discarded! * * * And the format is certainly open to improvement. * * * We see that the money of *Charles Garland* of Massachusetts is getting behind a revival of the *Masses* which *Max Eastman*, *Floyd Dell*, *John Reed*, and *Boardman Robinson* piloted through several stormy years, till it turned into the *Liberator*. * * * If you want a taste of the old *Masses* quality, by the day, read *Genevieve Taggard's* "May Days," (Liveright) an anthology of the poetry that used to appear in it. * * * *Michael Gold*, *Joseph Freeman*, *James Rorty*, *Hugo Gellert*, *John Sloan* and *Egmont Arens* are now taking hold and intend to make a new *Masses* which shall not copy the old one, but will swear allegiance, nevertheless, to the international labor movement. * * * It will not, however, have any connection with any political party, and will be responsible to no special propaganda. * * * "New forms, new themes, new artists, new laughters, and indignations," is its slogan. The publication address is at present 799 Broadway. We certainly wish this venture well! * * * In the Christmas book number of *The Independent*, *John Farrar* explains fully from a publisher's point of view, his attitude concerning what is known as "clean fiction." He has often been flagrantly misquoted. His paper elucidates what he really thinks. * * * In the same number *Arthur Maurice* is rather interesting concerning "The Best Sellers of Today and Yesterday." * * * The *Theatre Arts Monthly* for December, in "The Children of Skelt," contains an article by *Velona Pilcher* (it must be an assumed name!) upon toy theatres as they evolved in the early nineteenth century. * * * It was a conspiracy between the printseller and the theatre proprietor. The printer sent his artist to sketch theatrical performances of the time. These sketches were made into prints sold for a penny. Then came the "tuppence colored." "The Miller and His Men" was popularized for the nursery in this way as early as 1813. * * * There are eight huge volumes of this juvenile drama, prints and text, now in the British Museum, collected by a legendary Londoner, one *Ralph Thomas*. * * * *W. West* was the first of the printsellers, and the *Skelts* and *Pollock* are even better known. * * * All this is told by the writer of the article, and much more. * * * We ourself procured several years ago a number of the Pollock plays, with toy theatre, through the Bookshop for Boys and Girls in Boston. Several modern children that we know delighted and continue to delight therein. * * * Which reminds us that here on our desk lies *The Horn Book*, published four times a year by that very bookshop. It is one of the most interesting catalogues of books for children now issued. * * * In an interesting analysis in the Christmas number of the *Bookman* (whose rich contents, by the way, include work by *Thomas Burke*, *DuBose Heyward*, *Stella Benson*, *Zona Gale*, *Aldous Huxley*, *H. L. Mencken*, *Mary Rustin*, and so on), *Herbert S. Gorman* considers judicially the truth about the Pulitzer Prize awards. * * * Excepting the awards for history and poetry, the other awards are primarily ethical and *not* primarily for pure literary excellence. Thus are judged novels, biographies, and plays; and it is a holy wonder, under the circumstances, that *Eugene O'Neill* twice pulled down the golden check for drama! * * * Mr. Gorman's analysis is, as we say, judicial and well-restrained,—but we ourselves get a little warm when we consider the words limiting the fictional award to some work that "shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life, and the highest standards of American manners and manhood" * * * This is surely about as jejune a qualification as was ever set forth! Only a fool believes that the present phase of social and economic organization in America—and elsewhere—makes for a truly "wholesome atmosphere." * * * And what is the highest standard of American manners? * * * It is certainly not to be found, to our way of thinking, among the privileged classes who most pride themselves upon it. * * * And the highest standard to which American manhood at present subscribes is the money standard. * * * "Red" Grange we suppose would be cited as a fine clean upstanding example of American manhood. At any rate he is a whale of a football player! But the *New Republic* of December 9th made a few side-remarks on "Red Grange in Business" which we feel to be not without their pertinence. * * * "Red" asserted "on the air" that the great constructive thing about football was that it is the *sport* not the *money* that matters. And yet, as the *New Republic* says, we now for the first time see the possibilities of football as a *business*, a new aspect to which Mr. Grange himself has most pointedly called our attention. * * * Everything in America is, in fact, sooner or later turned into big business. What the *New Republic* calls "the dominant business culture" is *entirely* dominant. * * * We have seen the business of writing books turned into big business. * * * And all of us who write are out to make just as much money out of the marketing of our product as we can get for it. * * * And writers, in so far as they are good business men also, are surely just as fine clean upstanding examples of American manhood as even "Red" Grange. * * * The making of money and the making money work are the standards of American manners and manhood. * * * Well, what's wrong with it? * * * Nothing. Everybody knows it, everybody does it. * * * Only, if a truly honest and powerful novel were written around that central theme, the chances are that it would be branded as "cynical," "grossly material," "a misinterpretation of the high ideals of American life," "sordid," "brutalizing," and all sorts of other things. * * * At any rate, it could not procure the Pulitzer Prize! * * * There have been a number of good novels so written. Mr. Dreiser has written about the money standard realistically and unsentimentally. * * * He is by many regarded as a "sordid" novelist. * * * Well, now we're going to jump into the refrigerator and cool off. * * * *Osta Mañana!*

THE PHOENICIAN

NOTICE!

We are inclined to believe that many readers of *The Saturday Review* disagree with Mr. Leonard Bacon's review on December 5th of Christopher Morley's *Thunder on the Left*.

We believe that many readers rather agree with the N. Y. *Times* that *Thunder on the Left* "for sheer beauty and poignancy ranks with anything published on this side of the Atlantic in the memory of our generation."

AFTER NEXT WEEK, therefore, WE SHALL RUN THIS COLUMN BLANK until we receive from readers enough letters stating their views on this matter to fill it.

If you have formed your own opinion of *Thunder on the Left*, embody it in a letter to us; and with your permission we shall use the best of the letters so received in this space.

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